Copyrighted Material

ANARCHY and ART

From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Allan Antliff

Copyrighted Material

Anarchy and Art

Anarchy and Art

From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Allan Antliff

ARSENAL PULP PRESS
Vancouver

ANARCHY AND ART
Copyright © 2007 by Allan Antliff

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any form by any means—graphic, electronic or mechanical—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may use brief excerpts in a review, or in the case of photocopying in Canada, a license from Access Copyright.

ARSENAL PULP PRESS
Suite 200, 341 Water Street
Vancouver, BC
Canada V6B 1B8
arsenalpulp.com

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the British Columbia Arts Council for its publishing program, and the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program and the Government of British Columbia through the Book Publishing Tax Credit Program for its publishing activities.

Efforts have been made to locate copyright holders of source material wherever possible. The publisher welcomes hearing from any copyright holders of material used in this book who have not been contacted.

Text and cover design by Shyla Seller
Cover art: *Strike Zone* by Richard Mock, 1991

Printed and bound in Canada

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication:

Antliff, Allan, 1957-
Anarchy and art : from the Paris Commune to the fall of the Berlin Wall / Allan Antliff.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-55152-218-0 (pbk.)

1. Art—Political aspects. 2. Anarchism in art. 3. Art and society. 4. Artists—Political activity. 5. Anarchism. I. Title.

N72.P6A67 2007 701'.03 C2007-902269-3

Fight until the unborn lives, and the dying, die!
—Bayard Boyesen

Contents

	9	Acknowledgments
	11	Introduction
Chapter 1	17	**A Beautiful Dream**: *Courbet's Realism and the Paris Commune of 1871*
Chapter 2	37	**Wandering**: *Neo-Impressionists and Depictions of the Dispossessed*
Chapter 3	49	**Obscenity**: *The Advent of Dada in New York*
Chapter 4	71	**True Creators**: *Russian Artists of the Anarchist Revolution*
Chapter 5	97	**Death to Art!**: *The Post-Anarchist Aftermath*
Chapter 6	113	**Gay Anarchy**: *Sexual Politics in the Crucible of McCarthyism*
Chapter 7	133	**Breakout from the Prison House of Modernism**: *An Interview with Susan Simensky Bietila*
Chapter 8	181	**With Open Eyes**: *Anarchism and the Fall of the Berlin Wall*
	199	Bibliography
	209	Index

Acknowledgments

Research for this book was aided by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the University of Victoria, and the support of the Canada Research Chair program. I am particularly indebted to Wolf Edwards, Patricia Leighten, Mark Antliff, Richard Day, and Robyn Roslak for many invaluable insights. In addition, weekly discussions at the Victoria Anarchist Reading Circle were a constant stimulation. Finally, my thanks goes to Brian Lam, Shyla Seller, Robert Ballantyne, and Bethanne Grabham of Arsenal Pulp Press, who saw this book to completion with grace and élan.

Introduction

As its title indicates, this book was written in part to call attention to and encourage the development of an emerging field in art history: the study of anarchism in art. Though there are many monographs on artists who have identified as anarchists, to date broader surveys of the relationship between anarchism and art are few and far between. In part, this is because anarchist art has been perceived generally as one facet in a larger project—"leftist" art—with the result that differences between it and other traditions have often been glossed over or ignored altogether. This book, therefore, is a step toward the foregrounding of art production as it relates to historical, philosophical, social, and political issues from an anarchist perspective.

From European anarchism's beginnings in the nineteenth century, the arts have been an integral part of the movement, as evidenced by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's willingness in the 1860s to write an entire book in defense of the anarchist artist Gustave Courbet. In similar fashion, Peter Kropotkin's pamphlet "Appeal to the Young" (1880) counted artists as key players in the social revolution, and addressed them with this stirring call:

> . . . if your heart really beats in unison with that of humanity, if like a true poet you have an ear for Life, then, gazing out upon this sea of sorrow whose tide sweeps up around you, face to face with these people dying of hunger, in the presence of these many corpses piled up in these mines, and these mutilated bodies lying in heaps on the barricades, in full view of the desperate battle which is being fought, amid the cries of pain from the

> conquered and the orgies of the victors, of heroism in conflict with cowardice, of noble determination face to face with contemptible cunning—you cannot remain neutral. You will come and take the side of the oppressed because you know that the beautiful, the sublime, the spirit of life itself are on the side of those who fight for light, for humanity, for justice![1]

These positive views regarding the importance of art carry forward into the early twentieth century, when American anarchist Emma Goldman asserted: "Any mode of creative work which with true perception portrays social wrongs earnestly and boldly is a greater menace ... and a more powerful inspiration than the wildest harangue of the soapbox orator."[2] And we find this attitude echoed by anarchist theorists and activists up to the present day.

Why, then, has the anarchist movement attributed such importance to art? To answer this question, we need to examine the role of the individual in anarchist theory. In 1900, Goldman closed her essay, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For," with the following reflections:

> Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the domination of religion; the liberation of the human body from the domination of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth, an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.[3]

Goldman's statement points to how anarchism widens the field of political action far beyond the economic and class-based focus of Marxism and the socialist currents influenced by it.[4] She critiques religion for oppressing us psychologically, capitalist economics for en-

dangering our corporal well-being, and forms of government that shut down our freedoms. She also asserts that the purpose of anarchism is to liberate humanity from these tyrannies. And most importantly for our purposes, she predicts that in an anarchist social order, individuals will differentiate endlessly, according to their "desires, tastes and inclinations."

Goldman counted Kropotkin amongst her most important influences, so it is appropriate we turn to him for further insight. For Kropotkin, anarchism is synonymous with "variety, conflict."[5] In an anarchist society, "anti-social" behavior would inevitably arise, as it does at present; the difference being this behavior, if judged as reprehensible, would be dealt with according to anarchist principles.[6] More positively, the refusal to "model individuals according to an abstract idea" or "mutilate them by religion, law or government" allowed for a specifically anarchist type of ethics to flourish.[7] This entailed the unceasing interrogation of existing social norms in recognition that morals are social constructs, and that there are no absolutes guiding ethical behavior. Kropotkin characterized anarchist ethics as "a superabundance of life, which demands to be exercised, to give itself ... the consciousness of power."[8] He continued: "Be strong. Overflow with emotional and intellectual energy, and you will spread your intelligence, your love, your energy of action broadcast among others!"[9] In sum, the anarchist subject's power, situated socially, is not reactive; it is generative. Kropotkin wants power to "overflow"; it has to if a free social order is to be realized. We find the same perspective articulated in the early 1870s by Michael Bakunin—who most famously declared "the destructive urge is also a creative urge"—in his reflections on freedom and equality:

> I am free only when all human beings surrounding me—men and women alike—are equally free. The freedom of others, far from limiting or negating my liberty, is on the contrary its necessary condition and confirmation. I become free in the true sense only by virtue of the liberty of others, so much so that the greater the number of free people surrounding me the deeper

> and greater and more extensive their liberty, the deeper and larger becomes my liberty.[10]

Anarchist social theory develops out of this perspective. Bakunin goes on to theorize the necessity of socializing property in the name of individual liberty. Rejecting both state-adjudicated socialism and capitalism, he declares, "we are convinced that freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice, and that socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality."[11] Kropotkin similarly argued for the necessity of socializing property, while Proudhon supported the institution of private ownership on a small scale on the condition that it never become an instrument of domination.[12]

Configuring art within this tradition, it follows that, aesthetically speaking, diversity is inevitable: after all, the artist's creative freedom goes hand in hand with a politics that refuses power over others or hierarchical relations that would dictate what is and is not acceptable. The artist is also radically reflexive, because anarchists create art in tandem with the transformation of society anarchically, and they interrogate it with this aspiration in mind, giving rise to creative activity that enriches the field of art production and the libertarian social project.

This, then, is the terrain we will be exploring. Adopting an episodic approach, I discuss European and American art from the era of the Paris Commune through World Wars I and II to the fall of the Berlin wall. Each chapter examines the engagement of anarchist artists with a range of issues, including aesthetics, war and violence, sexual liberation, ecological crisis, militarism, state authoritarianism, and feminism. Throughout, the interface of art production and anarchism as a catalyst for social liberation has been my main preoccupation. In the spirit that gave rise to the art under examination, I have tried to ensure my reflections are accessible to the general reader as well as specialists.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1 Peter Kropotkin, "Appeal to the Young," in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, Roger N. Baldwin, ed. (New York: Dover Press, 1970): 273.
2 Emma Goldman, *The Social Significance of Modern Drama* (New York: Applause Theater Book Publishers, 1987): 1–2.
3 Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For," in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, with a new introduction by Richard Drinnon (New York: Dover Press, 1969): 62.
4 This aspect of anarchism has been noted by a number of contemporary theorists. See, for example, Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005): 15–16 and Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994): 50.
5 Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal" (1896), in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, 143.
6 Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchist Morality" (1891), in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, 106.
7 Ibid., 113.
8 Ibid., 108.
9 Ibid., 109.
10 Michael Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, G.P. Maximoff, ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1953): 267.
11 Ibid., 269.
12 On Kropotkin and Proudhon, see Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 3–5.

Chapter 1

A Beautiful Dream

Courbet's Realism and the Paris Commune of 1871

The 1871 Paris Commune, which pitted the armed populace of Paris against the armies of an arch-conservative government ensconced in Versailles, is a much studied episode in the history of European radicalism. That anarchist debates concerning art played a role in the event is rarely acknowledged. But art was an issue. In the preceding years, government attacks against Gustave Courbet—painter, anarchist, and future communard—had inspired philosopher and economist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to pen his last major statement, *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social* (1865). In *Du principe*, Proudhon praised Courbet for extending the dialectical interplay between anarchist social criticism and society's transformation into the artistic realm.[1] The same year the book was published, Proudhon's position was countered by the young journalist (and future novelist) Emile Zola, who argued that anarchism and art was an aesthetic issue, not a social one.[2] How this debate found its resolution is the subject of this chapter.

The story begins in the 1840s, when Paris became a haven for a small collection of political refugees known as the "radical Hegelians." This group of activists were then transforming the German academic Wilhelm Hegel's philosophy of history into a radical theory of social change which challenged the sanctity of the church, the system of monarchical rule, and capitalist property relations. Principal among them were the Russian Michael Bakunin, who arrived in France to avoid forcible extradition to Russia, and the Germans Karl Marx and Karl

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Lithograph after a photograph by Felix Nadar.

Grün, who had been forced out of Germany for their journalistic activities. In Paris, they all sought out and befriended Proudhon, then a French working-class economist in his mid-thirties who had only recently settled in the capital himself, in 1838. Proudhon had come to Paris under the auspices of a grant from the Academie de Besançon to study languages and political economy; however, academic sponsorship came to an abrupt halt after he published his stinging critique of capitalism and the state entitled *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* in 1840. Answering his leading query in no uncertain terms, Proudhon declared that "property is theft" and denounced "the government of man by man" in favor of a society based on "equality, law, independence, and proportionality"—principles which he argued found their highest perfection in the social union of "order and anarchy."[3] In one simple and compelling statement the anarchist movement was born, delivered in a message that rang as a clarion call throughout leftist Europe.[4]

Proudhon and his new friends met in the humble apartments, ale houses, and coffeehouses of working-class Paris, where they engaged in passionate discussions that turned on two issues: the critique of idealism mounted by the radical Hegelian philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, and the related concept of dialectics, which was central to the Hegelian theory of historical change.[5] Briefly, Hegel had posited that world history was driven by an unfolding process of alienation in which a divine "world spirit" manifested itself in partial and incomplete forms of self-knowledge, objectified in human consciousness as Reason and Freedom. This spirit was gradually emerging to complete

self-consciousness and self-definition through a dialectical process in which incomplete forms of self-consciousness manifest in human history were formulated, negated, and then reconciled in successively higher and more inclusive syntheses—syntheses that in turn were destined to themselves be negated and subsumed. History progressed along this dialectical path until the world spirit achieved total self-knowledge, at which time its own objectification and self-alienation would cease. In this scheme of dialectical progress, humanity played a key but sublimated role in the world spirit's development. "Man," wrote Hegel, "is an object of existence in himself only in virtue of the divine in him—that which is at the outset reason and which, in view of its activity and power of self-determination, [is] called freedom."[6] Society created institutions such as the state, and practices such as art, religion, and philosophy, in order to objectify these principles of spirit in the world, thus preparing the way for the reconciliation of the world spirit with itself through historical progress.[7]

Hegel argued that the dialectical manifestation of the world spirit's self-consciousness could only be recognized in retrospect, and that the future forms of reason and freedom could not be predicted. In other words, this was a philosophy of the status quo in which the current social state of affairs was justified as the latest manifestation of the world spirit's unfolding self-consciousness. Thus, in Hegel's treatment, the dialectic of human history was driven by a force external to it—the world spirit—which paradoxically ensured that history's development was out of humanity's hands.[8]

The radical Hegelians questioned this notion by utilizing the principles of reason and freedom to critically distinguish "the actual and rational features of the universe from the illusionary, irrational ones."[9] In Germany, for example, they rejected the prevailing monarchist political order and argued for the adoption of the bourgeois-democratic and republican principles of the French Revolution.[10] The radical Hegelians also introduced human agency into the dialectical process, equating their social critique with the dialectic of negation. In Lesek Kolakowski's words, they believed "the dialectic of negation

... must address itself to the future, being not merely a clue to understanding the world but an instrument of active criticism; it must project itself into unfulfilled historical possibilities, and be transformed from thought into action."[11]

Feuerbach's critique completed the radicals' revision of Hegel's grand scheme. Feuerbach argued that the divine world spirit was a fiction, and that the real dialectic driving history hitherto had been a process of human estrangement from our essence in which ideals born of human experience were continuously objectified in the form of metaphysical concepts attributed to otherworldly deities, such as goodness, justice, and love.[12] Humanity's self-negation through objectification could only be overcome by recognizing that such metaphysical principles were an illusion, since no ideals existed apart from humanity. "The species," wrote Feuerbach, "is the last measure of truth ... what is true is what is in agreement with the essence of the species, what is false is what disagrees with it."[13] Freedom, therefore, resided in our ability to realize these humanized ideals in the world. Once humanity recognized that the principles that constituted its essence were inseparable from its sensuous, historical experience, humanity could unite existence with essence, and life with truth.[14] Feuerbach characterized his philosophy as "anthropological" to signal that, finally, our metaphysical ideals had been brought down to earth and subsumed into humanity's sensuous, historical essence.

Proudhon was introduced to Feuerbach's critique by Karl Grün in the fall of 1844.[15] In *The Socialist Movement in France* (1845), Grün described his meetings with Proudhon and the French anarchist's eagerness to discuss German philosophy. Proudhon had already gained a cursory grasp of Hegel and was greatly relieved when Grün told him how Feuerbach's criticism dissolved the Hegelian "bombast."[16] Grün outlined Feuerbach's revision of Hegel for Proudhon and ended the conversation declaring his "anthropology" was "metaphysics in action," to which Proudhon excitedly replied, "I am going to show that *political economy* is metaphysics in action."[17]

Feuerbach provided Proudhon with the philosophical basis for

sweeping the metaphysical ethics of religion and philosophy aside in favor of moral principles logically "synthesized" from experience. In his 1858 publication, *Justice in the Revolution and in the Church*, Proudhon wrote, "metaphysics of the ideal taught by Fiche, Schelling, and Hegel is nothing: when these men, whose philosophy has rightly gained distinction, fancied they were deducing an *a priori* they were only, unknown to themselves, synthesizing experience."[18] Proudhon described his method of arriving at moral judgments as human-centered and anti-metaphysical:

> As far as I am concerned morality exists for itself; it is not derived from any dogma, or from any theory. With man consciousness/conscience is the dominant faculty, the sovereign power, and the others are useful to it as instruments or servants ... it is not at all from any metaphysics, from any poetry or from any theodicy that I deduce the rules of my life or my sociability; on the contrary, it is from the dictates of my consciousness/conscience that I should rather deduce the laws of my understanding.[19]

Feuerbach's dialectical and anthropological neo-Hegelianism, which underpinned Proudhon's concept of critical synthesis, led the French anarchist to justify revolutions as the supreme attempt to realize moral goals through social change. In his 1851 publication, *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, Proudhon called revolution "an act of sovereign justice, in the order of moral facts, springing out of the necessity of things, and in consequence carrying with it its own justification."[20] "Springing out of the necessity of things," moral imperatives changed as society changed: in this critical method, "justice" took on a radically contingent, historical, and social character.

Apart from Feuerbach, Proudhon was also indebted to the theory of dialectics espoused by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant.[21] In *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant claimed he had proved the

inability of human reason to know the world as it is, meaning the world conceived apart from the perspective of the knower.[22] Reason, he argued, could not transcend the boundaries of the sensible, and the dialectical nature of human reason was proof of this fact. Kant held that from any premise we could derive both a proposition and its negation. This dialectical opposition exposed the falsehood of the premise which gave birth to it, leading him to conclude that we could never attain the transcendental knowledge necessary for knowing the world in its totality. Kant called these dialectical constructs "antinomies."[23]

In Proudhon's anti-metaphysical reformulation of the Kantian dialectic, the social critic, guided by the imperatives of reason, deduced moral syntheses from dialectical contradictions found in society. The means by which a synthesis was transformed from a moral-based deduction of social contradictions to a resolution of those contradictions was through social transformation. Proudhon argued social contradictions, and the moral solutions the social critic deduced from these contradictions, were historically contingent and ever-changing.[24] In Proudhon's system, the free exercise of human reason in every social sphere came to the fore as the progressive force in history, a position which led him to argue that freedom from all coercion was the necessary prerequisite for realizing a just society. In James Rubin's words, "Proudhon held that anarchy (that is an-archy, the absence of authority) was the only possible condition for social progress."[25] Proudhon's anarchist philosophy of art followed from this critique of metaphysical idealism. He codified his position in *Du principe de l'art*, which was published the year of his death in 1865.

In the opening chapter, Proudhon informed his readers that the book was inspired by the French government's refusal to exhibit Gustave Courbet's painting, *Return from the Conference*, at the official state art exhibition of 1863.[26] Courbet was an old friend of Proudhon and a long-standing participant in the radical culture of Paris. His artistic notoriety stemmed from the years 1848–1851, when the French monarchy was overthrown and a Republican government was briefly instituted. In 1851, Courbet created a scandal at the state's annual art

Gustave Courbet, Return from the Conference, *1862–1863, destroyed 1945. Oil on canvas. From Rait*, Gustave Courbet, peintre, *1906*.

exhibition, where he exhibited two immense paintings depicting banal scenes from the life of the French peasantry, painted in a style akin to popular woodblock prints.[27] The upper-class public were accustomed to works such as Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Greek Interior* of 1850, which offered slickly painted "classical" titillations far removed from the social realities of the day. Courbet's *Stonebreakers* (see color plate 1) and *Burial at Ornans* (both painted in 1849–50 and exhibited in 1851), therefore, came as a shock. Displayed in the state salon where elite culture was traditionally celebrated, these paintings shattered the artistic boundaries between rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, and as a result they were roundly condemned for their rude subject matter, rough and "unfinished" brushwork, shallow perspectives, and overall lack of painterly decorum.[28]

But artistic crudity was not the sole reason for the heated objections to Courbet's work. During the short-lived Republic, the workers of Paris and Lyon engaged in violent agitation for the state to adopt Proudhon's call for "national workshops" that would guarantee

A Barricade at Neuilly, *Paris, 1871. Lithograph. From Ernest Alfred Vizetelly,* My Adventures in the Paris Commune, *1914.*

them employment, and the impoverished French peasantry were in a perpetual state of unrest against landlords in the countryside. Beset by growing working-class radicalism, the Parisian upper classes saw Courbet's paintings as an affront to establishment values in art and a political provocation against their power. Eventually they solved the problem of social unrest by throwing their lot in with the dictatorship of Louis Napoleon III, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, who proclaimed himself emperor after a coup d'état in 1851.[29]

The Republic may have been defeated; however, throughout Napoleon III's reign, from 1851 to 1870, Courbet continued to paint in the same uncompromising manner. He called his new style "realism," and paid tribute to himself and his accomplishment in a huge retrospective painting in 1855 entitled *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory.* In the center, Courbet depicted himself painting a landscape, observed by an admiring nude model. The model is "real," but also an allegorical figure of the painter's muse (nature). Behind the artist are the patrons, comrades, writers, and philosophers who inspired him—notably Charles Baudelaire on the far left (reading) and Proudhon, who surveys the scene from the back of the room. Facing the painter

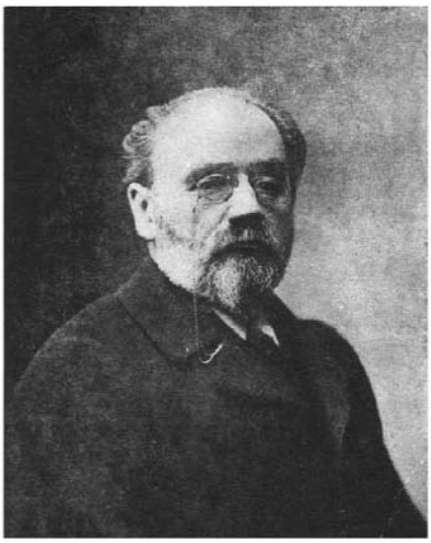
are the products of the corrupt and degenerate society he critiqued, including destitute workers, a businessman, and Napoleon III himself, with his hunting dog and gun.[30]

Courbet's *Return from the Conference*, which depicted drunken clerics on their way home from a religious gathering, was another realist tour de force, in this instance directed against the degenerate institution of the church. Refused a showing in the 1863 state exhibition and maligned by establishment critics, the painting provoked a tremendous storm of indignation, leading Courbet, who regarded the work as the artistic equivalent to Proudhon's own critical "synthesis" of society's wrongs, to ask the anarchist philosopher to defend it.[31]

In *Du principe de l'art*, which is based in part on a lively correspondence between painter and philosopher, Proudhon recounted Courbet's rebuke of the establishment critics who vilified *Return from the Conference*. The artist had condemned them "for misrepresenting ... the high mission of art, for moral depravity, and for prostituting [art] with their *idealism*." "Who is wrong," Proudhon asked, "the so-called *realist* Courbet, or his detractors, the champions of the ideal?"[32] His purpose was to critically resolve this question.

First, he turned his attention to the issue of idealism. Proudhon, following Feuerbach, viewed metaphysical knowledge as an impossibility, and this informed his critique of artistic idealism, in which he attacked the idea that metaphysical ideas could spring, fully-formed, from the imagination of the artist. Art, Proudhon argued, was made up of specific forms, subjects, and images. The idealized subject in art, therefore, was inseparable from the real objects it represented.[33] Thus, there was no metaphysical "separation of the real and the ideal" as Courbet's "idealist" critics maintained.[34]

Proudhon then took up the question of realism. By the early 1860s, other artists were also painting in a realist style; however, they tended to temper the aesthetic crudeness associated with Courbet and chose subject matter from everyday life that, though "real," would not offend. Proudhon criticized the artists of this "realist" camp, accusing them of maintaining that art should slavishly imitate reality. This, he



Emile Zola, n.d. Photograph.

argued, was a falsification of what art was.[35] A photograph, for example, could capture an image, but it could not replicate the power of the artist to magnify the qualities of character residing in a subject or imbue an inanimate object with meaning. Any "realist" aesthetic that imitated the photograph was "the death of art," Proudhon concluded.[36]

In his earlier writings, Proudhon posited an anti-metaphysical, moral critique as the basis for social advancement. In *Du principe de l'art*, he argued that art could, potentially, become a vehicle for such a critique. Art was a product of idealism, albeit idealism in a Proudhonian sense, because the creative imagination of the artist, like art's subject matter, was inseparable from the real world. Courbet not only recognized this fact; *his* realism turned art to critical ends in the interest of social advancement, bringing realism into line with Proudhon's prognosis for social reconstruction through critiques deduced from the material conditions of contemporary society. As such, Courbet's painting stood in stark contrast to both "photographic realism" and the "metaphysical" art of Gérôme and his ilk, wherein irrational and self-indulgent pursuit of otherworldly "chimeras" such as "beauty" elevated artistic contemplation to an ideal in-and-of-itself, rendering the critical power of human abstraction and reason "useless."[37] "Our idealism," wrote Proudhon, "consists of improving humanity ... not according to types deduced a priori ... but according to the givens supplied continuously from experience."[38]

Recognition of art's relationship to society, therefore, was the prerequisite for the free exercise of the artist's critical reason. In Feuerbachian terms, the artist gained freedom from the condition of

self-alienation engendered by a metaphysical world-view by taking up the cause of improving society through art. "Art," wrote Proudhon, is "an idealist representation of nature and of ourselves, whose goal is the physical and moral perfection of our species."[39] It would "progress as reason and humanity progress,"[40] revealing, "at last,"

> ... man, the citizen and scientist, the producer, in his true dignity, which has too long been ignored; from now on art will work for the physical and moral improvement of the species, and it will do this, not by means of obscure hieroglyphics, erotic figures, or useless images of spirituality, but by means of vivid, intelligent representations of ourselves. The task of art, I say, is to warn us, to praise us, to teach us, to make us blush by confronting us with a mirror of our own conscience. Infinite in its data, infinite in its development, such an art will be safe from all spontaneous corruption. Such an art cannot possibly degenerate or perish.[41]

Proudhon's public defense of Courbet in a lengthy book set the stage for the ambitious Parisian journalist Emile Zola to make his entrance. Zola was then establishing his reputation as a fiercely independent champion of radical politics and artistic independence.[42] And his critical rejoinder to Proudhon's thesis—a book review entitled "Proudhon and Courbet"—was nothing if not audacious. Zola opened his review declaring that he too supported "the free manifestation of individual thoughts—what Proudhon calls anarchy."[43] But here, the similarities ended.[44] Proudhon, Zola argued, was trapped by his method, which proceeded from a desire for the reign of equality and liberty in society to a logical deduction of the type of art that would bring about such a society.[45] The rigors of "logic" determined that Proudhon could only imagine one kind of artist: an artist who contributed to the anarchist struggle through the exercise of critical reason in the service of the social good.[46] The result was an impoverished definition of art. The author of *Du principle de l'art* defined art as "an idealization of nature

Burning the Guillotine on the Place Voltaire, *Paris, 1871. Lithograph. From Ernest Alfred Vizetelly,* My Adventures in the Paris Commune, *1914.*

and ourselves, whose goal is the physical and moral perfection of our species."[47] But this was an oppressive tautology which could broach no unruly deviation on the part of the artist from art's stated goal. Proudhon, concluded Zola:

> Poses this as his general thesis. I public, I humanity, I have the right to guide the artist and to require of him what pleases me; he is not to be himself, he must be me, he must think only as I do and work only for me. The artist himself is nothing, he is everything through humanity and for humanity. In a word, individual feeling, the free expression of a personality, are forbidden.[48]

Here, Zola's support for "the free expression of the personality" came head-to-head with the Feuerbach-derived underpinnings of Proudhon's notion of artistic anarchism. In *Du principe de l'art*,

Proudhon had reasoned, step by step, from a repudiation of photographic realism and metaphysical idealism in art to a reformulation which tied art inextricably to the improvement of society. Individual freedom only entered the realm of art to the degree that the artist mounted a moral critique. Zola quite rightly pointed out that Proudhon's concept of artistic liberty was tied to a historical mission, and thus found its sole libertarian legitimation in relation to it.

For Zola, on the other hand, the locus of freedom was the autonomous individual. In his words, "My art is a negation of society, an affirmation of the individual, independent of all rules and all social obligations."[49] Proudhon argued that moral imperatives derived from the study of society should shape art, and that Zola parried by marshaling a radical subjectivism in which the imagination of the artist stood in for the metaphysical realm of the ideal. "I will have Proudhon note," Zola wrote, "that our ideas are absolute.... We achieve perfection in a single bound; in our imagination, we arrive at the ideal state. Consequently it can be understood that we have little care for the world. We are fully in heaven and we are not coming down."[50]

"A work of art," he continued, "exists only through its originality."[51] Content in a work of art was of secondary importance because it always derived from something else—either the external world or traditional subject matter. The true measure of artistic freedom was style, and in this regard the artist's manipulation of formal elements such as color, texture, light, etc. was the only aspect of a painting that was unique—original—in a word, individual.

These are the terms in which Zola appreciated Courbet.[52] "My Courbet is an individual," he wrote, while praising the artist's youthful decision to cease imitating "Flemish and Renaissance masters" as the mark of his "rebellious nature."[53] Even realism was transformed into an extension of the artist's individualism. Courbet had become a realist because he "felt drawn through his physical being ... toward the material world surrounding him."[54] Zola drove the point home in a vivid description of a studio visit:

> I was confronted with a tightly constructed manner of painting, broad, extremely polished and honest. The figures were true without being vulgar; the fleshy parts, firm and supple, were powerfully alive; the backgrounds were airy and endowed the figures with astounding vigour. The slightly muted coloration has an almost sweet harmony, while the exactness of tones, the breath of technique, establish the planes and help set off each detail in a surprising way. I see again these energy-filled canvases, unified, solidly constructed, true to life and as beautiful as truth.[55]

Having established the libertarian primacy of style, Zola caustically ridiculed Proudhon for emphasizing the exact opposite, namely the subject matter. Proudhon saw Courbet "from the point of view of pure thought, outside of all painterly qualities. For him a canvas is a subject; paint it red or green, he could not care less.... He [always] obliges the painting to mean something; about the form, not a word."[56] The problem, Zola concluded, was that Proudhon failed to understand that "Courbet exists through himself, and not through the subjects he has chosen." "As for me," he continued, "it is not the tree, the face, the scene I am shown that moves me: it is the man revealed through the work, it is the forceful, unique individual who has discovered how to create, alongside God's world, a personal world."[57]

Zola defined a work of art as "*a fragment of creation seen through a temperament*" [Zola's emphasis].[58] For him, the "fragment" was secondary to "temperament" and the index of temperament was style. Equating the exercise of temperament with freedom, Zola turned stylistic originality into an anarchist act. Here, the politics of art imploded into the art object as the artist strove to assert personal freedom through stylistic innovation. The contrast with Proudhon's artist, who could not approach a condition of freedom except through social critique, seemed unequivocal. It took the Paris Commune (March 18 to May 28, 1871) to resolve the debate.

The Commune was an outgrowth of the defeat of Emperor

Paris in Flames, *1871. Lithograph. From Ernest Alfred Vizetelly,* My Adventures in the Paris Commune, *1914.*

Napoleon III following an ill-advised declaration of war with Prussia in July 1870. Prussia formed an alliance with other German principalities and invaded France. Defeat followed defeat and on September 2, 1870, Napoleon III surrendered with most of his army just outside Paris. Insurrectionary demonstrations in the capital led to his capitulation and the proclamation of a republican Government of National Defense on September 4. This government signed an unpopular armistice with the Germans on January 28, 1871. In early February, a newly elected and overwhelmingly conservative National Assembly transferred the seat of government from Paris to Versailles. While the conservatives consolidated at Versailles, radicals in Paris rejected the armistice and called for the socialization of the economy under a communal form of government. The Paris Commune was elected by 275,000 Parisians in March at the same time as parallel communes were declared in Lyons, Marseilles, Toulouse, Narbonne, Le Creusot, and St. Etienne. Later that month, National Assembly troops moved against the regional communes and by mid-April, Paris was left isolated.[59]

In Paris, the Communards implemented a host of popular measures such as the expropriation of workshops and their transfer to worker-owned cooperatives, the requisition of empty buildings for public housing, and paying top government officials the equivalent of a skilled worker's wage. Grassroots clubs in the city districts (*arrondissements*) infused Paris with the spirit of direct democracy. The founding dedication of one such club to "uphold the rights of the people, to accomplish their political education, so that they might govern themselves," communicates the anarchic tenor of city.[60] In April, the Commune attempted to rally the rest of the country to its cause in an appeal "to the people of France" calling for:

> the total autonomy of the commune extended to every township in France, and the ensuring to each the fullness of his rights and to every Frenchman the free expression of his faculties and aptitudes as man, as citizen and as worker; the commune's autonomy is to be restricted only by the right to an equal autonomy for all the other communes that adhere to the contract that will ensure the unity of France.[61]

Courbet, who regarded the Paris Commune as a first step towards Proudhon's anarchist program, threw himself into the effort.[62] On April 30, at the Commune's height, he wrote,

> I am, thanks to the people of Paris, up to my neck in politics: president of the Federation of Artists, member of the Commune, delegate to the Office of the Mayor, delegate to [the Ministry of] Public Education, four of the most important offices in Paris.... Paris is a true paradise! No police, no nonsense, no exaction of any kind, no arguments! Everything in Paris rolls along like clock-work. If only it could stay like this forever. In short, it is a beautiful dream. All government bodies are organized federally and run themselves.[63]

Bodies of Communards photographed at a Cemetery, Paris, 1871. *Photograph from Ernest Alfred Vizetelly*, My Adventures in the Paris Commune, *1914*.

The Federation of Artists had been formed on April 13 at Courbet's instigation. Its first act was to issue a manifesto declaring complete freedom of expression, an end to government interference in the arts, and equality amongst the membership.[64] Complete freedom of expression: for Courbet, there was no conflict between Zola's advocacy of freedom through style and Proudhon's advocacy of freedom through critique—an anarchist future could accommodate both.

On May 21, the French army finally breached the Commune's defenses and, backed by relentless bombardments, poured into the city centre. Barricades slowed the army down as the Communards fought back street by street and vast swaths of Paris were engulfed in flames. Once the Paris defenses had been breached, the military went on a killing rampage: fifteen- to thirty-thousand Parisians were slaughtered before the fighting finally ended on May 28; 38,000 more were arrested in its aftermath, including Courbet.[65] He spent six months in jail and his property was seized. Penniless upon his release and threatened with re-arrest, Courbet fled to Switzerland, where he died in exile on December 31, 1877.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social* (Paris, 1865).
2 Emile Zola, "Proudhon and Courbet," *My Hatreds*, trans. with an introduction by Paloma Paves-Yashinsky and Jack Yashinsky (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 9–21. The review was originally published in two instalments—on July 26, 1865 and August 31, 1865—in *Le Salut Public*.
3 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* (New York: Dover Press, 1970): 277, 280, 286.
4 The state was also paying attention: in 1842, Proudhon was charged with "attacking property, inciting contempt for government, and offending against religion and morals." Thanks to a skillful self-defence, he was acquitted. See Henri de Lebac, *The Un-Marxian Socialist: A Study of Proudhon*, R.F. Scantlebury, trans. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948): 7.
5 Bakunin was in Paris from March 1844 until November 1847 and he and Proudhon engaged in lengthy discussions about Hegel's dialectics, sometimes through the night. See Brian Morris, *Bakunin: the Philosophy of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993): 12–13; Marx lived in Paris from 1844 until his expulsion from France in February, 1845. Marx first met Proudhon in September 1844 and they also discussed Hegel's philosophy; James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980): 289–290; Karl Grün was Proudhon's third important source of information on Hegel and Feuerbach. Grün got to know Proudhon shortly after arriving in Paris in September 1844; Billington, 291.
6 Hegel, quoted in Lesek Kolakowski, *Main Currents in Marxism: The Founders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978): 72.
7 Ibid, 73.
8 Ibid, 82.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid, 83.
11 Ibid, 85.
12 David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969): 89.
13 Feuerbach quoted in ibid, 92.
14 Ludwig Feuerbach, "Provisional Theses for the Reformation of Philosophy," (1843), *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*, Lawrence S. Stepelevich, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 164.
15 George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987): 87–88.
16 Grün quoted in de Lebac, 134, note 33. According to Steven Vincent, Grün also provided Proudhon with translations of his article on Feuerbach, "Louis Feuerbach and the Socialists," (1845); Louis Feuerbach's preface to the second edition of his *Essence of Christianity* (1841); and a commentary on Feuerbach's philosophy by his brother Frederic Feuerbach, entitled *The Religion of the Future*

(1843–45). See Stephen Vincent, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984): 94–95.

17 Grün quoted in Woodcock, 88.

18 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'eglise* (Paris, 1858): 198.

19 Ibid, 492–93.

20 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Pluto Press, 1989): 40.

21 Proudhon read the French translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the winter of 1840 and again in the winter of 1841. See Vincent, 62, 72.

22 Roger Scruton, *Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982): 46.

23 Ibid., 48–49.

24 Bakunin also rejected the higher, subsuming synthesis of the Hegelian dialectical triad. See Robert M. Cutler, "Introduction," *The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869–1871*, Robert M. Cutler, trans. and ed. (New York: Prometheus Books, 1992). Cutler's is the best interpretation of Bakunin's dialectics I have encountered. Proudhon's reconciliation of Kant's critical dialectic with Feuerbach's radical Hegelian dialectic is a point of contention. Some state that the Hegelian model of the dialectic was rejected by Proudhon in favour of Kant's. Others read Proudhon's Feuerbach-influenced dialectic as Hegelian. Either way, Proudhon ends up being branded as a "confused" theorist and this has hampered discussion of his aesthetics. See, for example, T.J. Clark, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France—1848–1851* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 166–167.

25 James Henry Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 34.

26 Proudhon, *Du principle de l'art*, 1.

27 Courbet first gained recognition in 1848 when he won a state prize for the genre painting *After Dinner at Ornans* (1847).

28 See T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

29 Ibid.

30 Rubin, 38–47.

31 Ibid., 164.

32 Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, 3.

33 Ibid., 31.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 38.

36 Ibid., 39, 40–42.

37 Ibid., 199. Proudhon also condemned idealist "art-for-art's-sake" trends amongst anti-academic artists. See André Reszler, *L'esthétique anarchiste* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973): 20.

38 Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, 199.

39 Ibid., 43.

40 Ibid., 84.

41 Ibid.

42 Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, "An Artistic and Political Manifesto for Cézanne," *The Art Bulletin* (September, 1990): 484.
43 Ibid., 485. Zola's association of artistic individualism with anarchism continued into the 1870s and '80s. See Ann Lecomte-Himy, "L'Artist de Tempérment chez Zola et Devant la Public: Essai D'Analyse Lexicologique et Sémiologique," *Émile Zola and the Arts*, Jean-Max Guieu and Alison Hilton, eds. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1988): 85–98.
44 "I am diametrically opposed to Proudhon: he wants art to be the nation's product, I require that it be the product of an individual"; Zola, "Proudhon and Courbet," *My Hatreds*, 14.
45. Ibid., 9.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 11.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 20.
50 Ibid., 21.
51 Ibid., 12.
52 Ibid., 17.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 18.
56 Ibid., 19.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 12. Arguably, the Proudhon-Zola debate marks an important juncture in the history of nineteenth-century aesthetic theory. The formulation of an anti-metaphysical subjectivist aesthetic is commonly reserved for Friedrich Nietzsche. See Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).
59 *The Paris Commune of 1871*, Eugene Schulkind, ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972): 19–23.
60 "Organe des Clubes," *Bulletin Communal* no. 1 (May 6, 1871) in Schulkind, 127.
61 "An Official Proclamation of the Commune (April 19, 1871)," *Journal officeil de la Commune*, April 20, 1871) in Schulkind, 150.
62 In an open letter entitled "To the Artists of Paris" published on April 6, Courbet wrote that the "apostles" of the revolution were the workers and its "Christ" was Proudhon. This letter was accompanied by a call for a meeting the next day to form the Federation of Artists of Paris. Gustave Courbet, "To the Artists of Paris," *Journal officiel de la Commune* (April 6, 1871) in *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, P. Ten-Doesschate Chu, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 409.
63 Gustave Courbet to his family, Charenton, April 30, 1871 in *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, 416.
64 The manifesto is cited in Jean Péidier, *La Commune et les Artistes* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1980): 64.
65 Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, *My Adventures in the Commune: Paris 1871* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1914): 353–354.

CHAPTER 2

WANDERING

Neo-Impressionists and Depictions of the Dispossessed

> *At the bottom of the stairs lay the mariners of the street current, the tramps who had fallen out of the crowd life, who refused to obey—they had abandoned time, possessions, labor, slavery. They walked and slept in counter-rhythm to the world.*
> —Anaïs Nin, "Houseboat," 1941[1]

Following the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871, successive Republican governments presided over an explosive expansion of French industrial capitalism which quickly eroded older, more rural forms of production and community life. The economic juggernaut was made possible thanks to a new infrastructure of rail lines and roads which spread through the countryside, bringing economic transformation to hitherto relatively untouched areas.[2] It came with a price: in villages, towns, and hamlets throughout France, the products of local craftsmen were displaced by cheap goods mass-produced in factories, and small-scale farms geared to the material needs and ecological capacities of the local community were undermined by imported produce from abroad and the reconfiguration of agricultural production on a large-scale, export-oriented basis. This process was augmented by a great economic depression that lasted from 1873 to 1896, a crisis which forced artisans and peasants into debt, and from there to the

Gustave Marissiaux, The Slag Heap, *ca 1904. Photograph.*

mines, factories, mills, and urban centers that fed the industrial capitalist monolith.[3]

Roger Magraw writes that as the old skills and rural communities died, "uprooted, alienated, deskilled workers took refuge in consumerism, or, more often, in drink, crime, and domestic violence."[4] But many of the displaced refused to be victims; instead, they entered into a state of revolt against encroaching capitalist servitude, articulated in the form of an anarchist critique of marginalization and the cruel existence of the dispossessed.

Nowhere was this critique more clearly encapsulated than in the art of the neo-impressionists. The term "neo-impressionism" was coined in 1886 by the anarchist art critic Felix Feneon to character-

ize the stylistic evolution of a group of Paris-based painters whose ranks included Paul Signac, Camille Pissarro, Lucien Pissarro, Georges Seurat, Anna Bloch, Charles Angrand, Maximilien Luce, Albert Dubois-Pillet, and Henri Edmond Cross; shortly thereafter, the group expanded to include Théo Van Rysselberghe and a circle of artists based in Belgium. The difference between impressionism and neo-impressionism, Signac would later explain, was the neo-impressionists' "scientific" application of color, as opposed to "instinctual"; a second difference was that, politically speaking, almost all of the neo-impressionists were avowed anarchists whose paintings and graphic contributions to journals such as *Le Père Pinard*, *L'en dehors*, *La Plume*, *L'Assiette Au Beurre*, and *Les Temps Nouveaux* played a key agitational role in the movement.[5]

Take, for example, *Les Errants (The Wanderers)* (1897) (see color plate 2), a lithograph produced by Théo Van Rysselberghe for an album of prints issued by *Les Temps Nouveaux* (see color plate 2). Van Rysselberghe's title came from a poem of the same name by the anarchist playwright Emile Verhaeren. In the corner of the print is a passage from Verhaeren's poem which reads: "Thus the poor people cart their misery for great distances over the plains of the earth ... " In the late 1880s and early 1890s, the workers of Belgium had repeatedly risen up in a series of mass strikes, riots, and violent clashes with the police and army. The first such incident erupted in the industrial city of Liège, where a commemoration of the Paris Commune led to full-scale rioting that spread throughout the country's industrial mining region.[6] We can better grasp the desperation of the region's workers through photographs of their living hell—the prosperous (from a bourgeois perspective) towns where workers were reduced to combing slag heaps for bits of coal "after hours." Men, women, and children worked ten- to thirteen-hour days, six days a week, in the mines and mills of Belgium; they were paid at or below subsistence level, and if there was no work, they starved.[7]

Van Rysselberghe's *Wanderers* are refugees displaced by poverty, the police, and the army. In the 1890s, thousands of such families were

forced to tramp the roads of Belgium by grinding unemployment, lock-outs, or brutal acts of government suppression; "They cart their misery for great distances," Verhaeren wrote. Enraged at the injustice, Van Rysselberghe depicted these outcasts in their most abject moment of defeat, condemned to wandering without end in a world ruled by an economic system that "capitalizes everything, assimilates everything, and makes it its own."[8]

But to where might they have wandered? Perhaps to the city, to join the multitudes of unemployed and underemployed. Henri Lebasque's lithograph, *Provocation* (1900), distributed by *Les Temps Nouveaux*, bears testimony to the kind of marginalization awaiting them in the great marketplaces of capital. A stark critique of starvation in the face of capitalism's bountiful plenitude, the provocation is the commodification of bread, humanity's most basic sustenance. A child stands weak and listless, staring at loaves displayed in a brightly-lit shop window; business prospers while the child is hungry. Similar testimony to the inhumane nature of capitalism is captured in a drawing for *Les Temps Nouveaux*'s July 1907 issue by George Bradberry, depicting an emaciated tramp who pauses to stare at fat cows chewing their cud. "The starving man," reads the caption, "envies the satiated beasts!" And so the rural outcast stands mute by the field—valueless, penniless, and "worthless."

Whilst some anarchist artists focused on the dispossessed's plight, others chose to portray the oppression of work under capitalism. In 1889, Camille Pissarro created a small booklet entitled *Social Turpitudes*, which depicted the drudgery of emergent forms of urban wage labor. Among them is an image of seamstresses subject to the watchful eye of a supervisor. They hunch over piecework in a debtor's prison where they have been condemned by their poverty to endless, repetitious tasks such as this. Pissarro also depicted the brutalization of day-laborers; an illustration for the May 1893 issue of *La Plume*, for example, shows the back-breaking drudgery of stevedores who spent their lives—when they could obtain work—shoveling and hauling coal.

Henri Lebasque, Provocation, *1900. © Estate of Henri Lebasque / SODRAC (2006)*
Lithograph from Album Les Temps Nouveau. *Private collection.*

Maximilien Luce, The Factory Chimneys: Couillet Near Charleroi, *1898–1899. Oil on canvas. © Estate of Maximilien Luce / SODRAC (2006)*

Thus far I have discussed the neo-impressionists' damning criticism of industrial capitalist labor and the injustice of working-class destitution. However, this was not the sum total of their viewpoint; they also pointed to different possibilities lying dormant in Europe's besieged pre-capitalist ways of life. Here, critique was wed to utopia, and the condition of wandering took on new meaning.

The latter theme emerges in a painting by Maximilien Luce entitled *The Factory Chimneys: Couillet Near Charleroi* (1898–1899). Luce was an uncompromising working-class militant who was briefly imprisoned for his anarchist activities in 1894. Toward the end of the 1890s, he traveled through northern France and Belgium, recording his impressions of the mining towns and factories.[9] An exhibition of his paintings held in 1891 led one anarchist art critic to note that he found in Luce's work "the bleeding soul of the people, the life of the multitudes anguished and inflamed by suffering and bitterness."[10]

Factory Chimneys is dominated by the grim industrial capitalist inferno of Couillet, where treeless streets of rooming houses disgorged workers daily into the mills. But in the corner of the painting, a man and boy walk away from the entrapment of this inferno. Their destination is unnamed; their purpose, undetermined. They might be setting out on a journey, or perhaps they seek momentary respite from the grey, polluted environment they leave behind. In any event, they are passing from one world to another—the rhythm of capital gives way to the rhythm of nature.

Peter Kropokin, 1899. Photograph.

Luce and the neo-impressionists were fully aware of the violence that emergent capitalism did to nature's rhythms, and the crippling contortions its industries imposed on humanity. They read the critiques of Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin, both of whom condemned the disequilibrium of industrial capitalism as a violation of harmonious social relations and, ultimately, of humanity's relationship to the earth.[11] Writing in 1864, Reclus observed:

> The barbarian pillages the earth; he exploits it violently and fails to restore its riches, in the end rendering it uninhabitable. The truly civilized man understands that his interest is bound up with the interest of everyone and with that of nature.[12]

Nineteenth-century anarchists sought to end this barbarism in the name of a social order in which property would be held in common and social and ecological devastation would come to an end. Harmony entailed a freedom that respected and nurtured differences while sus-

taining the good of the whole. Just as mutual aid undergirded the diverse interrelatedness of plants, insects, and animals, so humanity could realize a greater diversity through cooperation.[13] However, for many, this farsighted and demanding vision seemed to run against the grain of history.[14]

Where, then, could anarchism find a sure footing in society? In the first instance, among other anarchists. Reclus wrote of anarchists' obligation "to free ourselves personally from all preconceived or imposed ideas, and gradually group around ourselves comrades who live and act in the same fashion." Such "small and intelligent societies," he argued, could form the basis of a greater harmonious social order.[15]

However, communities of anarchists were not the sole social force working against the industrial capitalist leviathan. Reclus and others looked to the surviving patterns of communal existence among the peasantry, where the traces of a different social rhythm still prevailed. Camille Pissarro's great neo-impressionist paintings, such as *Apple Picking at Eragny-sur-Epte* (1888) (see color plate 3), capture the cadence of this life, where work was relatively untouched by the regulatory regime of capitalized production. These workers take their time; they pause to chat amongst themselves, and their activity is voluntary and cooperative. Here, humanity transforms the world through cultivation rather than destruction.

Thus, everyday life approaches a condition of harmony akin to anarchism—or so the anarchist writer and critic Octave Mirbeau thought. For him, Pissarro's canvases depict a world animated by "the ideal," where the cities of capital, "booming as they may be, are no more perceptible, having no more planetary importance, behind the fold of terrain that hides them, than the lark's nest in the bottom of a furrow."[16] Without a doubt, these paintings verge on utopian. We know that Pissarro and other anarchist artists also depicted the brutalization of landless peasant laborers on the large capitalized farms of rural France. However, the neo-impressionists were equally enthralled by the lifecycle they encountered in Europe's small hamlets and land-holdings, where self-sufficiency and pre-capitalist ways still persisted.

In fact, the technique of the neo-impressionists was suffused with anarchist politics. Their application of unique and discrete colors on the canvas—the small dots of paint that give their paintings their soft glow and shimmering radiance—accorded to scientific principles of vision, so as to produce an overall harmonious effect. This painterly technique was their analogue for the harmony in freedom that could unite humanity and, in turn, reconcile us with nature. In her masterful study of the movement, Robyn Roslak writes that the visual synthesis of the neo-impressionist canvas represented:

> ... the progressive process through which harmony and variety in unity (terms which defined the ideal anarchist social structure) were achieved. These, of course, were the very terms which the neo-impressionists and their critics used to describe neo-impressionist painting. There, individual spots of paint, akin to the human individuals in anarcho-communist social theory, are amassed to form unified, harmonious, synthetic compositions, which appear as such because of the way in which the discrete colors are scientifically applied to compliment one another while preserving their own, unique character.[17]

Thus, the neo-impressionists fused politics with reality, giving their ideals a material presence in the form of social critiques on canvas that pointed toward an anarchic future.

Of course, this future could not be achieved without revolution. And the anarchists knew that among the masses of displaced and dispossessed workers, the memory of revolts and the hope of revolution remained intact. In fact, many anarchist militants came from the ranks of these working-class itinerants, who played a key role in the movement as they traveled from place to place spreading revolutionary ideas through pamphlets, songs, and conversations.[18] In 1896, Henri-Edmond Cross paid homage to one such anarchist in an illustration, *The Wanderer*, issued by *Les Temps Nouveaux*. Copies of this print may well have circulated the length and breadth of France and beyond.

In it, the "Wanderer" sits alone, caught up by a visionary revelry,

Henri-Edmond Cross, The Wanderer, *1896. Lithograph from* Les Temps Nouveaux. *Private Collection.*

which is depicted behind him. The revolution has been won, and workers are throwing the insignia of capitalist oppression—flags and other symbols of authority—into a raging bonfire. These workers, and the wanderer himself, are surrounded by a beautiful neo-impressionist landscape: harmony in freedom has banished tyranny.

Anarchists such as those in Cross's *The Wanderer* were outcasts, but they also were free. Their freedom resided in a day-to-day life apart from capital, as well as the revolutionary vision they propagated to those encountered along the way. Like Nin's tramps, they too abandoned time, possessions, labor, and slavery in a refusal to obey. And, like them, they existed in counter-rhythm to a society in which their ideals were deemed valueless. But they also struggled for a better world.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1 Anaïs Nin, *Under a Glass Bell* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1946): 111.
2 Roger Magraw, *A History of the French Working Class: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic*, 1871–1939 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992): 5–7.
3 Magraw, ibid., 5.
4 Ibid., 11.
5 On the neo-impressionists' politics, see Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape* (London: Ashgate, 2007) and John Hutton, *Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground: Art, Science and Anarchism in Fin-de Siècle France* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Press, 1994). Signac outlines the difference between impressionism and neo-impressionism in Paul Signac, *D'Eugène Delacroix au néoimpressionisme* (Paris: 1899): 100, 102. *Le Père Pinard* was founded in 1889 by Emile Pouget as a weekly targeting Parisian workers. In the early 1890s its readership approached 100,000, according to police estimates. *L'en dehors* began in 1891 and was edited by the anarchist-individualist Zo d'Ax. *La Plume*, edited by Léon Deschamps, was launched in 1891 and combined essays on art and poetry with anarchist theory. *L'Assiette Au Beurre* (founded 1901) was an illustrated publication edited by Samuel Schwartz and André de Joncières that featured contributions from anarchist artists of various orientations. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, edited by Jean Grave, was the flagship journal of French anarchist communism from its founding in 1895. On *Le Père Pinard*, *L'en dehors*, and La Plume, see Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989): 17–36. On *L'Assiette au Beurre* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*, see Patricia Leighten, "Réveil anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art," *Modernism/Modernity* 2 no. 2 (1995): 26–27.
6 Stephen H. Goddard, *Les XX and the Belgium Avant-Garde* (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, 1992): 24.
7 Ibid., 56, 69–70, notes 6, 7.
8 Jacques Camatte, *The World We Must Leave* (New York: Autonomedia, 1995): 39.
9 Sonn, 145.
10 Georges Darien, "Maximilien Luce," *La Plume* LVII (1891): 300.
11 John Clark and Camille Martin outline the ecological foundations of anarchist communism in *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: The Radical Social Thought of Elisée Reclus*, John Clark and Camille Martin, eds. and trans. (Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2004): 3–113.
12 Elisée Reclus, "Du Sentiment de la nature dans les sociétés modernes," *La Revue des deuxmondes* 1 (December, 1864) quoted in Marie Fleming, *The Geography of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988): 114.
13 Peter Kropotkin outlines this thesis in Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988).
14 As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Marxism, which argued the spread of industrial capitalism was the necessary precursor to socialism, drew millions into

its fold. On Marxism and industrial capitalism, see Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

15 Reclus to Clara Koettlitz, April 12, 1895 quoted in Fleming, 175.

16 Octave Mirbeau, "Camille Pissarro," *L'Art dans les deux mondes* 8 (January 10, 1891), quoted in Martha Ward *Pissarro, Neo-impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 181.

17 Robyn Sue Roslak, Scientific Aesthetics and the Aestheticized Earth: the Parallel Vision of the Neo-Impressionist Landscape and Anarcho-Communist Social Theory (PhD diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1987): 204.

18 For a period discussion of itinerant anarchists and their role in the movement, see Félix Dubois, *The Anarchist Peril* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894).

Chapter 3

Obscenity

The Advent of Dada in New York

Many are familiar with the early twentieth-century Dada movement, when anti-war artists from a range of countries attacked the social and cultural order that had given rise to World War I. In the current literature, it is commonplace to date Dada's New York beginnings to French artist Francis Picabia's arrival in June of 1915 and his five "object portraits" published in the July–August issue of the avant-garde art journal *291*.[1] These depictions are rightly singled out because they embody so many of the definitive features of Dadaist production in New York, in thattheir evocation of industrialism and commercialism violated the conventions defining art while simultaneously setting off a chain of associative readings that transgressed the subject at hand.

Where I part with the prevailing view, however, is in regard to Picabia's attitude towards the United States and, by extension, the role ascribed to him in the development of American modernism. Art historian Wanda Corn and others have argued that the object portraits were a celebratory incorporation of American popular culture into high art, a broadening, if you will, of the modernist landscape to include the American point of view.[2] However, this reading downplays the complexity of Picabia's portraits as well as the dissident politics that inspired them. By way of reply, this chapter focuses on one of these works, *Portrait of a Young American Girl in a State of Nudity* (1915), as a case study in how the advent of Dada in New York was bound up

with an anarchist critique of contemporary American culture and the distinctive type of modernity it embodied.

Picabia was a Paris-based painter who had first visited the United States in the company of his wife, Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, in 1913 to attend the opening of a large-scale exhibition of European and American modernism known as the Armory Show. The exhibition began in New York (February 17–March 15) and then traveled to Chicago (March 24–April 16) before closing in Boston (April 28–May 19). The Picabias arrived in New York on January 20 and stayed on through February and March before departing home for France on April 10. In New York, the couple met with the photographer Alfred Steiglitz, who ran a small non-commercial gallery (known as "291," after its Fifth Avenue address) and journal—*Camera Work*—to showcase the latest experiments in European and American modernism. During their stay, the Picabias grew close to Steiglitz and many others in his circle, notably the Mexican caricaturist Marius de Zayas, the anarchist journalist Hutchins Hapgood, and Paul Haviland, a wealthy art collector and photographer.[3]

Prior to his New York visit, Picabia had been exhibiting for just under two years with a group of Parisian cubists (the "salon cubists") led by painter and theorist Albert Gleizes, who co-authored the seminal statement, *Cubism* (1912), with fellow painter Jean Metzinger. Gleizes was the group's organizational dynamo who arranged exhibitions, promoted the movement in the press, and discouraged any aesthetic deviations.[4] The group's successes in Paris ensured that when the American organizers of the Armory Show went to France in a quest for modern art, they would return with a substantial list of cubist paintings and sculpture. At the Armory Show, Picabia exhibited four paintings, including *Dances at the Spring* (1912) (see color plate 4), alongside work by Gleizes, Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Roger de La Fresnaye, Fernand Léger, and Jacques Villon.[5]

Picabia's paintings were textbook examples of the cubist aesthetic circa 1912, which followed the metaphysical tenets of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. Briefly, Bergson argued that the conventional

Francis Picabia, Portrait d'une Jeune Fille Americaine dans l'état de Nudité. 291, *nos 5-6, July-August 1915.* © *Estate of Francis Picabia / SODRAC (2006).*

Francis Picabia, ca 1913. Photograph.

scientific view of the world—which filtered perception through clock time, Newtonian physics, and Euclidian geometry—was a falsehood. Developing a metaphysics to counter it, he posited that the true state of matter could only be grasped through a suspension of the intellect so as to open us to intuition. According to Bergson, artists were more capable than others of entering into a sympathetic, intuitive relationship with the world, a claim that was also trumpeted by Gleizes and the cubists, who based their style on these principles.[6]

In *Time and Free Will* (1889), *Creative Evolution* (1907), and other works, Bergson argued that matter was actually energy in a condition of flux and interpenetration and that each moment in time was qualitatively different from the last, like the condition of matter itself. This was the reality that cubism depicts. In Picabia's *Dances at the Spring*, for example, the dancers' bodies appear to break up and merge with their surroundings because the painter is trying to represent the dynamism of matter in space and time as filtered through his artistic intuition.[7]

So things stood in 1912. However, upon arriving in New York, Picabia made a dramatic break with the cubist movement. As recorded by Hutchins Hapgood in an interview for the *Globe* newspaper, Picabia argued that the artist's role was not to "mirror the external world" but rather "to make real, by plastic means, internal mental states."[8] Picabia explained that he could no longer follow cubism because the cubists were "slaves to the strange desire to reproduce" the external world, just like the old masters whose works hung in the dusty halls of the Louvre.[9]

While his cubist paintings were on exhibit in the Armory Show, he began working in a new "post-cubist" style.[10] This was an "unfettered, spontaneous, ever-varying means of expression in form and color waves," painted "according to the commands, the needs, the inspiration of the impression, the mood received."[11] The results—sixteen watercolors, including *New York Perceived Through the Body* (1913)—were exhibited at a one-man show (with catalogue) which opened at Steiglitz's 291 gallery on March 17, two days after the New York leg of the Armory Show closed.[12] In a special catalogue statement summing up his new aesthetic, Picabia claimed to be unleashing "the mysterious feelings of his ego." An article on "The Latest Evolution in Art and Picabia" published in Stieglitz's in-house journal, *Camera Work*, went further. Here, his style was characterized as "the real Anarchy, needed and foreseen."[13]

What prompted Picabia to reject cubism in favor of abstraction? The impetus can be traced to a second ex-cubist, Marcel Duchamp. In the summer of 1912, Duchamp left Paris for Munich, where he studied Max Stirner's anarchist-individualist manifesto, *The Ego and Its Own*, a materialist critique of metaphysics and an assertion of libertarian individualism.[14] Stirner argued that the metaphysical thinking underpinning religion and notions of truth laid the foundation for the hierarchical division of society into those with knowledge and those without. From here, an entire train of economic, social, and political inequalities ensued, all of which were antithetical to anarchism.[15] Combatting metaphysics, Stirner countered that ideas are indelibly grounded in our corporal being. The egoist, therefore, recognized no metaphysical realms or absolute truths separate from experience. Indeed, Stirner deemed the very notion of an "I" to be a form of metaphysical alienation from the self. Libertarian "egoism," Stirner wrote, "is not that the ego is all, but the ego *destroys* all. Only the self-dissolving ego . . . the *finite* ego, is really I. [The philosopher] Fichte speaks of the 'absolute' ego, but I speak of me, the transitory ego."[16] Once conscious of its freedom, this self-determining, value-creating ego inevitably came to a "self-consciousness *against* the state" and its oppres-

sive laws and regulations.[17] As Stirner put it, "there exists not even one truth, not right, not freedom, humanity, etc., that has stability before me, and to which I subject myself."[18] He concluded:

> I am the *owner* of my might, and I am so when I know myself as *unique*. In the *unique one* the owner himself returns into his creative nothing, out of which he is born. Every higher essence above me, be it God, be it human, weakens the feeling of my uniqueness, and pales before the sun of this consciousness. If I concern myself for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say: I have set my affair on nothing.[19]

Years later, Duchamp related that reading Stirner in Munich brought about his "complete liberation."[20] He and Picabia were very close, and upon returning to Paris that fall, they likely discussed Stirner's ideas at length.[21] In any event, scarcely three months later, Picabia was introducing New Yorkers to "the mysterious feelings of his ego" in free-flowing expressions "cut loose" from cubist "convention" and its "established body of laws and accepted values."[22]

If Stirnerist egoism pushed Picabia to adopt a new expressive style, it also, evidently, reinforced his predilection for challenging the statist and religious mores of his day: Picabia was an archhedonist who engaged in numerous extra-marital affairs and excessive drug taking. "He went to smoke opium almost every night," Duchamp later recalled, "[and] I knew that he drank enormously too."[23] This hedonism would take a decidedly political turn after Picabia returned from New York.

For example, in 1913, he lent his name to anarchist-led protests in Paris against the censorship of a newly unveiled monument at the famous Père Lachaise cemetery honoring the era's most notorious homosexual, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900). Objecting to the monument's prominent genitalia and the very idea that a disgraced homosexual merited any memorial, officials had covered the statue with a tarpaulin

and fixed a metal plate over the offending organ. In response, a group of Parisian-based anarchist-individualist artists who called themselves the Artistocrats mounted a campaign in defence of the monument. Writing in their journal *Action d'art*, they celebrated Wilde's sexuality as a healthy expression of egoist anarchism and condemned the censors as sex-negative perverts whose prudery went against the laws of nature. They also published a full-page anti-censorship statement with Picabia's name listed among its signatories.[24]

Picabia was shortly to marshal his own protest against the same censorious forces besieging the Wilde monument. His first full-scale exercise in artistic "egoism" upon returning from New York was an attack on the repression of sexual impulses under the moral regime of Catholicism. The imposing canvas, the enigmatically titled *Edtaonisl (Ecclesiastic)* (see color plate 5), was exhibited at the Autumn Salon of November 1913. The painting's subject was a Dominican priest whom Picabia had witnessed during the sea voyage to New York furtively watching the rehearsals of a Parisian exotic dancer.[25]

Asked to explain his painting, Picabia related that he had fused impressions of the "rhythm of the dancer, the beating heart of the clergyman, the bridge [of the ocean-liner] ... and the immensity of the ocean."[26] Here, Picabia echoed a central tenet of Stirner's philosophy: that the idealist notion of a "soul" separate from the body fostered self-alienation and the suppression of our natural desires and pleasures.[27] Rooted in sensation, his painterly critique of alienation played havoc with artistic conventions, metaphysical idealism, and the priest's vow of chastity. Thus, he brought the moral cornerstone of Catholicism into disrepute while at the same time leaving critics dumbstruck before one of modernism's earliest examples of full-blown abstraction.[28]

When World War I began in August 1914, Picabia was conscripted, but initially avoided the trenches by arranging enlistment as a chauffeur for a French cavalry general behind the lines, first at Bordeaux and then Paris. Increasingly endangered by the war's progression (he was deemed fit for the infantry), he next secured an assignment as an army purchasing agent and was sent overseas in the summer of 1915

to procure supplies in the Caribbean.[29] Promptly abandoning his mission upon reaching New York in June 1915, he reconnected with de Zayas, who had just launched the satiric avant-garde monthly *291* that March. While still in Paris, Picabia had contributed *Girl Born Without a Mother* (ca 1915), a loosely sketched depiction of rods and springs erupting in ill-defined activity, to *291*'s June 1915 issue. This was followed in the July-August edition by the five meticulously executed "object portraits," including the drawing of a spark plug, *Portrait of a Young American Girl in a State of Nudity* (1915), mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.[30]

Read sequentially, the portraits are witty and sometimes caustic commentaries on the personalities associated with de Zayas' journal. The portrait gracing the cover of *291*, for example, is a broken camera with lens extended, whose bellows has become detached from the armature and is collapsing. Attached to the side of the camera is an automobile brake set in park, and a gearshift resting in neutral. The lens strains toward the word "Ideal" printed above it in Gothic script; beside the apparatus is stenciled, *Here, This is Steiglitz / Faith and Love* (1915). Steiglitz, whom Picabia had befriended during his first New York excursion in 1913, had a long history of opposing modern art's commercialization, which he feared would compromise the artist's creative integrity. For over a decade he had run his gallery as a noncommercial venue where New Yorkers could gain exposure to modern photography, sculpture, and painting and, if Steiglitz deemed them sincere in their admiration, purchase a work at prices that varied widely according to the means of the admirer and other considerations.[31] Picabia had exhibited at this gallery and was intimately familiar with its workings, as was de Zayas. Indeed, de Zayas had named his journal after Steiglitz's gallery to signal his allegiance to the latter's ideals; however, by the summer of 1915, he was rethinking his position.

De Zayas saw a need for a more conventional approach, believing modernists of quality could maintain their independence regardless of commercial pressures if their art was effectively promoted by sympathetic professionals who respected their freedom and paid them

well for sales. When Picabia arrived in New York, he joined the debate on the side of de Zayas and as a result, a rift developed. By July, de Zayas had decided to usurp the preeminence of Steiglitz's project and embark on a new venture, to be located in midtown Manhattan and christened the "Modern Gallery" (the gallery eventually opened in October 1915).[32] Exasperated by Steiglitz's continuing hostility, Picabia and de Zayas evidently called him to account. The July–August cover of *291* suggested Steiglitz's efforts to popularize modernism on his terms were as exhausted as a broken camera. It was also a potshot at propriety: the sagging bellows resemble a slackened and impotent penis, incapable of achieving an erection.[33]

Inside the journal were four more drawings. The first, a self-portrait, was a car horn entitled *The Saint of Saints—This is a Portrait About Me* (1915). The horn is positioned against what appears to be an automobile cylinder and spark plug depicted in cross-section; Picabia loved fast cars and here he is, blowing his own horn as the avant-garde artist who is more "advanced" than anyone else. The horn was followed by the spark plug rendering *Portrait of a Young Girl in a State of Nudity*, which referred to artist Agnes Ernst Meyer's role as the "spark" that had started the journal by agreeing to bankroll it behind the scenes. The next portrait, *De Zayas, De Zayas!* (1915), plays on the editor's vision in founding a journal devoted to satire. It consists of electrical wiring linking an improbable ensemble of objects—a corset, automobile headlights, an electrical post, and a gyrating mechanical device—all of which "work" to create illumination. The final portrait, *Voila Haviland the Poet as He Sees Himself* (1915), depicts his friend Paul Haviland as an electric lamp with no plug; earlier, in June of that year, the Franco-American Haviland had been forced to "unplug" himself from participating in *291* following a summons from his father to attend to the family business in France. These insular references would have eluded most of *291*'s readers; they have only come to light thanks to painstaking art historical research.[34]

In an interview for the *New York Tribune* in October 1915, Picabia described his new portrait style as revelatory, relating that upon dis-

embarking in New York, he had been struck by America's "vast mechanical development." "I have enlisted the machinery of the modern world, and introduced it into my studio," he provocatively argued, because "the machine" is "more than a mere adjunct to life. It is really a part of human life—perhaps its very soul."[35]

Ascribing such significance to machines underlines the multifaceted complexity of Picabia's new style, in which he furthered his rejection of cubism and his hostility toward censorious social institutions in a critique with America as its cipher. This was a remarkable exercise in artistic iconoclasm, but to grasp its ramifications, we need to examine *Young American Girl* more closely from a cubist perspective.

As we have seen, the cubists trumpeted their style as the product of an intuitive, anti-intellectual, and qualitative experience of reality. They even went so far as to equate a cubist artwork, born of qualitative experience, to a living organism.[36] The antithesis of qualitative perception was the utilitarian state of mind, which quantified, ordered, and standardized nature. According to Bergson, this type of thinking was unartistic, but could nonetheless provide occasion for a distinctive kind of artistry, namely the comic; this is the theme of his book *Laughter* (1900), which analyzed humor's relation to our lesser utilitarian minds.

Bergson's thesis focused on moments of disjuncture when manifestations of living, organic, qualitative being get mixed up with the inorganic, quantitative, and lifeless. He characterized the type of being that is the antithesis of a living entity as "readymade" and "mechanical." "The attitudes, gestures, and movements of the human body," he wrote, become laughable in "exact proportion as the body reminds us of a mere machine."[37] Contrasts of automatism with natural movement, "the rigid, ready-made, and mechanical" with "the supple, ever-changing, and living," were "the defects that laughter singles out."[38] Here, we find one of the satirical themes in *Young American Girl* and the other object portraits; Picabia drew on Bergson's thesis concerning humor to mount what was, in effect, a parody of cubism.

A cubist portrait was understood to be an artistic exercise of pro-

found sympathy, in which the artist captured the sitter's unique personality through a process of intuition attuned to the life force of the subject, right down to her material dynamism. To quote Gleizes and Metzinger in *Cubism*, by circumnavigating the intellect, the artist created a "sensitive passage between two subjective spaces" in which "the personality of the sitter" was "reflected back upon the understanding of the spectator."[39] As such, the painting was a unique expression of a unique moment in the creative evolution of both the artist and the subject.

Picabia's *Young American Girl* is the antithesis of this. It is, in cubist terms, completely art-less, lacking in emotion, empathy, or originality: or rather, it is a parodic inversion of Bergsonian cubist values, an exercise in mimicry that apes the painterly idealism it critiques in its guise as a humorous joke. To cite Bergson:

> Whether we find reciprocal interference of series, inversion, or repetition, we see that the objective in comedy is always the same—to obtain what we have called a mechanization of life. You take a set of actions and relations and repeat it as it is, or turn it upside down, or transfer it bodily to another set with which it partially coincides—all these being processes that consist in looking upon life as a repeating mechanism, with reversible action and interchangeable parts.[40]

Cubism is made fun of, but this is not the only target. What, for instance, was Picabia saying about the United States when he represented Americans, including a "young girl," as machines? I would argue he was passing judgment, and that his assessment is less than flattering. Taking his comments to the *New York Tribune* reporter as our starting point, Picabia suggests that Americans are distinguished as a nation by an advanced state of industrialism, which dominates them to such a degree that machine qualities have invaded their very souls, so to speak. Thus, Picabia inverts cubism's metaphysical reading of what it is to be human in order to clear the ground for addressing the culture

of the United States critically. And through this elliptic process of mirroring he comments not only on its industrial prowess, but also on the mass marketing that drives it. Picabia's young American girl is a diagrammatically drawn spark plug—the sort of thing one could find in any auto-parts catalogue, newspaper, or magazine advertisement.[41] However, if this is advertising, what of its content? Stripped of art's aura, the patina of beauty encapsulated by the girl's "state of nudity" implied something else: a marketing ploy that pointed to the portrait's encoded satiric function as sexual provocation.

This sexual stamp had Parisian roots. In all likelihood it was inspired in part by *Supermale* (1902), a satirical (and certainly by American standards, obscene) novel by the French satirist Alfred Jarry.[42] Jarry's book tells the story of an American scientist who creates a "perpetual motion food" which allows for, among other things, non-stop sex. In a challenge to her father, the scientist's young daughter—"a little slip of a girl"—demonstrates that she can achieve the same results through sheer force of will. The object of her affections is a machine-like "super-male" who is abnormally lacking in emotion. After a lengthy performance with the young girl, he dies while hooked up to another of her father's inventions, a love-inspiring machine.[43]

The Jarryesque subtext of Picabia's *Young American Girl*, then, is its tongue-in-cheek presentation of feminine sexual allure Americanized, industrialized, and commercialized. Think of this portrait as a satire of American advertising in which Picabia shamelessly parades a young girl for sale in a "state of nudity" with a standard manufacturer's guarantee—FOR-EVER—of flawless performance in perpetuity. Certainly, this latter feature is what caught the attention of the *291* circle. In an accompanying article on the object portraits, de Zayas wrote that modern art could only succeed in the United States if it adopted the features of commercialism—and then praised Picabia for inventing such an art.[44]

More to the point, Picabia had created an artistic means of attacking this commercialism on its own turf. *Young American Girl* was a slap in the face of the puritanical artistic values underpinning the mass

Alfred Jarry, 1896. Photograph by Felix Nadar.

marketing of modern American femininity. In the early twentieth century, popular magazines and advertisements were filled with unsullied but curvaceous full-bodied beauties such as J.C. Leyendecker's vacationing golfers or popular magazine illustrator Howard Chandler Christy's virginal *American Girl* (1912), from his "Liberty Bells" series. In the minds of both publishers and the general public, such idealizations made the marketing of femininity respectable, even aesthetically and culturally uplifting.[45]

Picabia's version of commercialized womanhood mirrored and mocked American marketing by stripping its prototype *Young American Girl* down to her "essence" as a sexual commodity for sale. Here, the politics of censorship make their entrance, because Picabia's portrait can also be read as a challenge to the repressive anti-obscenity laws which were at the time regulating American artistic production, both high and low.

The spearhead of censorship was Anthony Comstock, Special Agent for the United States Postal Office and chief investigator for the New York Society for the Repression of Vice, an organization empowered to arrest and charge anyone in possession of literature, photographs, or artwork it judged to be obscene.[46] From 1873, when the Federal obscenity law ("The Comstock Act") was passed, Comstock and his agents had full power to search premises and seize materials at will. In the first two years alone, over 194,000 pictures and photographs were confiscated and destroyed under their watch. At the same time, anti-vice organizations and state laws against vice mushroomed around the country.[47]

Art was not immune from the onslaught. One of Comstock's earli-

Howard Chandler Christy, The American Girl, Liberty Belles, *1912. Oil on canvas.*

est raids targeted a fashionable New York art gallery for distributing reproductions of "objectionable, lewd, and obscene" work by "the modern French School" (the works in question were nudes by well-known French academics such as William-Adolphe Bouguereau).[48] The repressiveness was such that by 1895, no less a figure than Kenyon Cox of the conservative New York Academy of Design was complaining bitterly about it.[49] The illustration beauties of American commercial art, therefore, reflected more than native prudishness: they were carefully calibrated to sell a product while remaining firmly within the boundaries of what the censors deemed respectable.

When did censorship in the United States become a concern of Picabia's? As we have seen, upon returning to France in the summer of 1913, he had challenged censorious moralizing in his own country by signing the petition in support of the Wilde monument and exhibiting the anti-clerical *Edtaonisl* that November. Earlier still, however, he was involved in another obscenity controversy. In March 1913, while Picabia was in New York, the Armory Show traveled to the Chicago Art Institute, where conservatives reacted by filling the press with letters and articles condemning the exhibition, in particular calling the room given over to the French cubists "obscene," "lewd," "immoral," and "indecent."[50] Chicago's anti-vice Law and Order League called for the exhibition's closure, and civic figures such as clergymen and high school instructors concurred.[51] The mayor of Chicago even joined the bandwagon by visiting the exhibition, where he singled out Picabia's *Dances at the Spring* and made fun of it in the company of reporters.[52]

Finally, in early April, the Illinois Senate sent a vice investigator to examine the artwork. In a front-page news story for the *Chicago American*, the investigator declared cubism to be "lewd" and feared for its "immoral effect on other artists."[53] Based on the investigator's report, the State Lieutenant Governor ordered the Illinois Senate's anti-vice "White Slave Commission" (white slavery was a popular term for prostitution) to determine whether or not the art was "harmful to public mores" (in the end the exhibit was allowed to continue).[54] The level of hostility was so intense that the alarmed New York organizers

published a hastily compiled pamphlet entitled *For and Against*, which reprinted, among other items, a statement by Picabia that had accompanied his "post-cubist" exhibition at Steiglitz's 291 gallery.[55]

Recall that when this scandal reached its boiling point in early April, Picabia was spending considerable time with the journalist Hutchins Hapgood. Hapgood was a member of the Free Speech League, an organization founded in 1902 with the express purpose of challenging Comstock and the anti-obscenity laws.[56] Picabia might well have discussed the Armory Show's reception in Chicago with Hapgood or, for that matter, with any of the artists and critics in the Steiglitz circle. The depths of their pro-vice contempt for censorship are ably summed up in a caricature published in *The Revolutionary Almanac* (1914) by Hippolyte Havel, a friend of Steiglitz and Hapgood who also knew Picabia.[57] Entitled *Saint Anthony, Guardian of Morals* (ca 1914), the illustration accompanies a story in which Comstock muses on the trials of life in a world of "nudity and shamelessness," where "good and chastity" go unrewarded while those with "neither conscience nor care" feast on "sinful life's joys." Frustrated by this state of affairs, he dreams of overthrowing God—who has evidently acquired a taste for vice—in order to decree that the entire universe be surveyed, from dawn to sunset, by a censoring army of "emissaries, spies, and detectives."[58] One can well imagine Picabia chortling at the joke.

In 1915, the Chicago events of two years earlier might have seemed like a distant memory were it not for the fact that in March, just a few months before Picabia's arrival in June, none other than Comstock himself again raised the hackles of New Yorkers by raiding an art exhibition at a popular Greenwich Village restaurant run by Havel and his lover Polly Holiday.[59] The art in question was a series of nudes by Clara Tice, a young artist who had studied under the anarchist painter Robert Henri.[60] During the raid, outraged patrons blocked Comstock's officers until one of them, Alan Norton, editor of an irreverent monthly magazine entitled *Rogue*, announced that he was purchasing the entire collection on the spot.[61] This threw a wrench

Saint Anthony, The Guardian of Morals, *ca 1914. From Hippolyte Havel, ed.,* The Revolutionary Almanac, *1914.*

into Comstock's rights of seizure and brought the raid to an end, though charges were laid.

The incident got front-page coverage the next day in the *New York Tribune* and rekindled the New York modernists' fight against Comstock's censorious regime.[62] In May and July of 1915, the art promoter and publisher Guido Bruno defied the law by mounting two exhibitions in his Greenwich Village gallery featuring drawings of nudes by Tice.[63] In the wake of her subsequent trial (and acquittal) on obscenity charges in September, he staged a mock court event where Tice defended herself before a cross-section of New York's avant-garde.[64] By the time Picabia arrived in New York, therefore, the Tice affair would very likely have caught his attention, given his past encounters with the American drive to suppress "vice" during the Armory Show.

Let us return, then, to Picabia's *Young American Girl* and consider it more closely from this perspective. In her 1997 study *Suspended License*, Elizabeth Childs has observed that "the history of censorship is not just a matter of institutional solutions to embarrassing or threatening art; it is also a history of individual artistic decisions made in the face of such policies."[65] Childs enumerates a range of artistic responses to such repression, from self-censorship to avoid persecution to courting it by breaking the rules anyway. And then there are the more subterranean tactics of "working inside or around a censorious art system." "These tactics," she writes, "include changing the venue for the exhibition of the work; changing the image itself; changing the context for viewing the work; appearing to follow the rules while encoding prohibited sentiment in art; or perhaps the most effective ploy, turning the tables and attacking the censoring institution through the art itself."[66]

Young American Girl encodes *and* attacks. Read as a brazen "advertisement" of a young girl's naked sexuality, the portrait is nothing less than a pornographic outrage worthy of the severest prosecution. Yet it isn't, literally—one has to interpret it as such. Here, Picabia

echoed one of the most telling accusations American radicals leveled against Comstock—pornography is in the mind of the beholder. Furthermore, in the course of doing so, he exposed the hypocrisy undergirding American censorship. The nakedness of this portrait was all about "marketing the product"; thus, in one fell swoop, Picabia put the lie to the puritanical grease facilitating the capitalization of sex for profit. Here, Bergson gets the last word. In *Laughter*, he speculated:

> Might not certain vices have the same relation to character that the rigidity of a fixed idea has to intellect? Whether as a moral kink or a crooked twist given to the will, vice has often the appearance of a curvature of the soul. Doubtless there are vices into which the soul plunges deeply with all its pregnant potency, which it rejuvenates and drags along with it into a moving circle of reincarnations. These are tragic vices. But the vice capable of making us comic is, on the contrary, that which is brought from without, like a ready-made frame into which we are to step. It lends us its own rigidity instead of borrowing from us our flexibility. We do not render it more complicated; on the contrary, it simplifies us.[67]

Whereas America was vice-ridden in the worst sense, Picabia was vice-ridden in the best sense. His subtle and mercurial ego, untouched by vice's "tragic" aspect, deployed the humorous side of the equation by way of parodying the "moral kink" of Comstockery as a mechanical simplification in a "readymade frame": *Portrait of a Young American Girl in a State of Nudity*.

If we read Picabia's object portraits as a straightforward embrace of things American, we are missing the point. Certainly, he introduced a new field of expression to art in the United States, but he did so in solidarity with anarchist currents of dissidence decidedly at odds with the establishment values that claimed purchase on America. In other words, the advent of Dada in New York was as much a political event as an artistic one.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1 Rudolf E. Kuenzli, "Introduction," *New York Dada*, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, ed. (New York: Willis Locker and Owens, 1986): 2–3.
2 Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 64–66.
3 On Picabia and Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia's visit, see the leading authority on New York Dada, Francis M. Naumann, *New York Dada* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994): 19–20.
4 The leading role of Gleizes is discussed in Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): passim.
5 See the catalogue listings of works exhibited in *The Armory Show 50th Anniversary Exhibition* (New York: Clarke and Way, 1963): 190, 200.
6 On cubist aesthetics as codified by Gleizes and Metzinger, see Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*, 39–66.
7 Ibid., 46–48.
8 Hutchins Hapgood, "A Paris Painter," *New York Globe*, February 20, 1913, 8.
9 "Picahia, Art Rebel, Here to Teach New Movement," *New York Times* (February 16, 1913): sect. 5, 9.
10 The style was destined to stir considerable controversy. See Ineana B. Leavens, *From "291" to Zurich: The Birth of Dada* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983): 74–75.
11 "A Post-Cubist's Impressions of New York," *New York Tribune* (March 9, 1913): part 11, 1.
12 The exhibition ran from March 17 to April 5.
13 The preface was reprinted as "Cubism by a Cubist: Francis Picabia in the Preface to the Catalogue of his New York Exhibition," *For and Against: Views on the International Exhibition held in New York and Chicago*, Frederick James Gregg, ed. (New York: Association of American Painters and Sculptors, Inc., 1913): 45. See also Maurice Aisen, "The Latest Evolution in Art and Picabia," *Camera Work*, Special Number (June 1913): 21.
14 Stirner's influence is discussed in Francis M. Naumann, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites," *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century*, Rudolf E. Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann, eds. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989): 29–32.
15 Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own* (London: A.C. Fifield, 1915): 180–190; 473.
16 Ibid., 237.
17 Ibid., 361.
18 Ibid., 463
19 Ibid., 490.
20 Naumann, "A Reconciliation of Opposites," 29.
21 For example, Duchamp and Picabia might have conversed about Stirner during a trip to Jura, France in October of that year, just prior to Picabia's trip to the

United States. The Jura trip is discussed in William A. Camfield, *Francis Picabia: His Art, Life and Times* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979): 35.

22 "A Post-Cubist's Impressions of New York," 1.

23 Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo, 1987): 32.

24 Mark Antliff, "Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism: The 'Aestheticism' of the Action d'art Group, 1906–1920," *Oxford Art Journal* no. 21 (1998): 109.

25 Virginia Spate, *Orphism: The Evolution of Non-Figurative Painting in Paris, 1910–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978): 328.

26 Camfield, 61.

27 The mind-body fusion is the basis for Stirner's materialist critique of the "soul"—a self-alienating concept used by Christianity to suppress our sensual inclinations. See Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 77; Stirner, 451–453.

28 The critical reception is discussed in Camfield, 59.

29 Ibid., 71.

30 Naumann, *New York Dada*, 59–60. According to Michel Sanouillet, the first three issues of *291* (March, April, May) were mailed to Picabia in Paris, and he created his drawing at the request of de Zayas for inclusion in the June issue. Michel Sanouillet, "Picabia's First Trip to New York," *Dada New York: New World for Old*, Martin Ignatius Gaughan, ed. (New York: G. K. Hall, 2003): 118.

31 I discuss the exploitive commercial pressures on American modernists and various attempts to overcome them in Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 24; 32–33; 54–55.

32 Marius de Zayas, *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*, Francis M. Naumann, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996): 90–96.

33 Richard Whelan, *Alfred Steiglitz: a Biography* (New York: Little, Brown, 1995): 348–349.

34 Naumann, *New York Dada*, 60–61.

35 "French Artists Spur on an American Art," *New York Tribune* (October 24, 1915): 2.

36 Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*, 35.

37 Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1900) in *Comedy*, Wylie Sypher, ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press): 79.

38 Ibid., 145.

39 Gleizes and Metzinger, *Cubism* quoted in Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*, 48.

40 Bergson, 126.

41 William Innes Homer has traced Picabia's advertisement sources. See William Innes Homer, "Picabia's 'Jeune fille américaine dans l'état de nudité' and 'Her Friends'," *Art Bulletin* 58 (March 1975): 110–115.

42 Linda Henderson, *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in the Large Glass and Related Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 47–51.

43 Alfred Jarry, *The Supermale* (New York: New Directions, 1977).

44 Maurice de Zayas, "New York At First Did Not See," *291* 5–6 (July–August 1915): n.p.

45 In her exhaustive study of such representations, Martha Banta singles out Christy's series as the prototype ideal. Martha Banta, *Imagining American Women:*

Idea and Ideals in Cultural History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987): 206–211.

46 Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 3.

47 Jane Clapp, *Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972): entry 1874 (b), 151.

48 Ibid., entry 1887, 160–161. Some of the artists are listed in Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 168.

49 Kenyon Cox to Mr. Fraser, April 2, 1896, Century Collection, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

50 See, for example, "May Bar Youngsters From Cubists Show," *Chicago Record Herald* (March 27, 1913): 22; "Art Institute Censured by Pastor for Display of 'Vulgar' Pictures," *Chicago Record Herald* (April 8, 1913): 9.

51 Milton W. Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988): 208–209.

52 "'I See It'" Says Mayor at Cubist Art Show," *New York Herald* (March 28, 1913): 9.

53 "Cubist Art Called Lewd: Investigator for Senate Vice Commission Fears Immoral Effect on Artists," *Chicago American* (April 3, 1913): 1.

54 "Slave's Commission to Probe Cubist Art," *The Inter-Ocean* (April 2, 1913): 10. Reporters who were invited along recorded that Picabia's *Dancers at the Spring* was again singled out for derisive comment during the commission's visit; "Art of Cubists Staggers Critics in State Senate," *The Inter-Ocean* (April 3, 1913): 1.

55 Picabia, "Cubism by a Cubist," 45–48.

56 Hutchins Hapgood, *A Victorian in the Modern World* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939): 279. The League's founding and activities leading up to World War I are discussed in David M. Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 44–64.

57 Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 97–99.

58 "The Confiscated Picture," *The Revolutionary Almanac*, Hippolyte Havel, ed. (New York: Rabelais Press, 1914): 70–71.

59 Marie T. Keller, "Clara Tice, 'Queen of Greenwich Village,'" *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*, Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998): 414. On Havel and Holiday see Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 80.

60 Keller, 415.

61 Ibid., 414.

62 Ibid., 417–418.

63 Ibid., 414.

64 Ibid., 418.

65 Elizabeth C. Childs, "Introduction," *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*, Elizabeth C. Childs, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997): 15.

66 Ibid., 16.

67 Bergson, 69–70.

Chapter 4

True Creators

Russian Artists of the Anarchist Revolution

"Three artists spent the night in the mansion, since outside the museum a studio was set aside for making art. As the artists told it, that memorial morning, 'We were awakened by shouts of, "We'll shoot! Hands up!"' Armed soldiers ordered them to get dressed, took them out to the courtyard and together with anarchists sent them off to the Kremlin." This is Aleksandr Rodchenko's description of a government raid on the anarchist-held Morozov mansion in Moscow in the early morning of April 12, 1918, published in *Anarkhiia (Anarchy)*. The report survives as an undated fragment in the New York Public Library, where North America's only copy of the short-lived revolutionary newspaper was allowed to disintegrate, neglected and forgotten, until the remains were microfilmed some years ago.[1]

The obscurity of *Anarkhiia* mirrors the fate of Rodchenko's anarchism. Consult any history of the Russian avant-garde and you will read that the artistic left pledged allegiance to the "October Revolution," i.e. the Communist Party coup of 1917 and subsequent dictatorship.[2] What this narrative buries, however, is a messy history of artistic rebellion and political repression which engulfed Rodchenko and others during the years 1917–1919, when anarchism, not Marxism, was the raison d'être of their art.

The Russian Revolution began in February 1917, after soldiers sent to quell anti-war strikes and rioting in the capital of St. Petersburg (renamed Petrograd during the war and later, Leningrad) joined the

protestors instead. It was hardly surprising that revolt was in the air. When World War I broke out, the absolute monarchy of Nicholas II, Tsar of the Russian Empire, was allied with France and Britain. Russia's ill-equipped and under-supplied armies were sent to do battle against the formidable forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary. By February 1917—the beginning of the revolution—millions of Russian lives had been lost, the front was deep inside Russian territory, the economy was collapsing, and the government was in disarray.

Events in St. Petersburg precipitated a crisis during which Nicholas II was persuaded to abdicate in favor of an ad hoc provisional government formed by political leaders from a hitherto powerless parliament—the Duma—that the Tsar had created in the early 1900s. The provisional government was pro-capitalist and determined to continue Russia's failing war effort despite growing rebellion amongst the troops. But during the spring and summer of 1917, its power was increasingly usurped in the cities, towns, and rural regions by local councils ("soviets") made up of elected delegates representing the majority population—workers and peasants. The "workers' and peasants' soviets" amalgamated into regional federations, which in turn allied with urban-based factory committees formed by workers who were benton asserting public control of their factories and workshops. Soldiers began forming soviets as well, and discipline in the army broke down, setting the stage for the events of October 1917. That fall, the Russian Communist Party, led by Lenin, secured majority representation in the soviets of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Rallying other radicals to its side under the slogan "all power to the Soviets," the Communist Party spearheaded a successful coup under the auspices of a Soviet Military-Revolutionary Committee. On October 25, soldiers and armed workers stormed the headquarters of the unpopular provisional government centers in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The leaders of the provisional government fled, and the next day the Military-Revolutionary Committee, which was under the control of the Communist Party, announced that it was forming a new governing "Soviet of People's Commissars" made up exclusively of Communist

Party members, with Lenin at the helm. This marked the beginning of Communist Party dictatorship in Soviet Russia, an era that would only come to an end with the fall of the Berlin wall. But before this dictatorship could consolidate, the Communists had to fight for four years (1917–1921) against the invading armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary, anarchist insurgency in Russia and the Ukraine, and a host of reactionary generals (known as the "whites") bent on restoring the Tsarist monarchy.

Let us return, then, to the night of April 11–12, 1918. The month before, on March 3, a delegation of Communists acting on behalf of the Soviet government concluded a separate peace with Germany and its allies at Brest-Litovsk by ceding a quarter of Russia's arable land, a quarter of its population, and three-quarters of its industry to the German and Austria-Hungarian empires.[3] Prior to the conclusion of negotiations, the Communist Party had split into a Leninist "right" wing, which favored a separate peace, and a more popular "left" wing, which opposed the action. The position of the left echoed the sentiments of the majority of workers' and peasants' soviets, where negotiations with Germany were condemned and resolution after resolution called for a revolutionary war to defeat world capitalism.[4]

In the early months of 1918, anarchist opposition to the negotiations was adamant and unequivocal. In his book *The Russian Anarchists*, Paul Avrich cites Aleksandr Ge, a prominent anarchist-communist, who delivered a speech at the Central Executive Committee of Soviets on February 23 in which he threatened: "The anarchist-communists proclaim terror and partisan warfare on two fronts. It is better to die for the worldwide social revolution than to live as a result of an agreement with German Imperialism."[5] Russian anarchist-syndicalists took the same position, calling for the organization of "relentless partisan warfare" by guerrilla detachments throughout the length and breadth of Russia.[6] And they were serious: during February and early March, the local clubs of the Moscow Federation of Anarchists organized detachments of "Black Guards," armed with rifles, pistols, and grenades.[7]

In Moscow, there were at least twenty-five anarchist clubs where the detachments gathered. These clubs were more than meeting places; they were radical cultural institutions. For example, the "Dom' Anarkhiia" (House of Anarchy), where the federation's official paper *Anarkhiia* was published, also featured a library and reading room, "proletarian art printing" facilities, a poetry circle, and a large theater hall in which plays were performed and lectures held.[8] Many of the structures occupied by the anarchists had formerly housed the Moscow elite; when the anarchists moved in, they turned them into communes and invited workers to share their new quarters.[9] The Morozov mansion had been the residence of a textile mill owner who was one of the richest men in Russia; under anarchist occupation, it served as commune, artists' studio, and a people's museum. Valuable porcelain, rare engravings, and other museum artworks were destroyed during the raid of April 12—an act that Rodchenko vigorously protested in his article "O Muzei Morozova."[10]

The ostensible reason for the April 12 government attacks on the Morozov mansion and other anarchist centers in Moscow was a series of expropriations conducted by the Black Guards in March and early April, but the real motivation was to shut down the movement in Russia.[11] Russian anarchist Gregorii Maximov's study of the movement's repression contains a number of articles and documents which lay bare the Communist strategy.[12] The government's political police force, known as the Cheka, issued an official release in the wake of the raids declaring that their purpose was to disarm "bands styling themselves as Anarchists." "The All-Russian Committee Against Counter-Revolution (Cheka)," states the release, "invites all citizens who have suffered from the attacks of robber bands to appear at the militia headquarters for the purpose of identifying the hold-up men detained during the disarming of the Anarchist groups." Thus, the anarchists were criminalized.[13] Simultaneously, the Moscow Council of People's Commissars, acting on behalf of the Moscow Soviet, branded them with an additional smear—"counter-revolutionaries." The Council's statement read:

> Notwithstanding the most challenging trenchant ideological criticism of the Soviets and the Soviet Power on the part of the anarchist papers (*Anarchy, Voice of Labor*, etc.) the Moscow Soviet refrained from taking any repressive measures against the anarchists.... At the same time the Moscow Soviet had definite information to the effect that entire counter-revolutionary groups are joining the anarchist armed detachments, having for their aim the utilization of the latter for some kind of covert action against Soviet Power. And already the anarchist press and speakers called upon their followers to start upon this course of action directed against the Soviet.... The Council of People's Commissioners, the Soviet and Moscow Province and the Presidium of the city soviet of Moscow found themselves facing the necessity of liquidating the criminal adventure, of disarming the anarchist groups.[14]

"Liquidation" has an appropriate ring in light of subsequent events. During the Cheka raids, forty anarchists were killed or wounded, and over 500 were taken prisoner.[15] In prison, they were stripped of their clothing and lined up for examination by "the well-to-do of the city"—invited, as we have seen, by the Cheka to identify "thugs and bandits."[16] That morning, *Anarkhiia* failed to appear, and the next day, the anarchist-syndicalist paper *Golos Truda (Voice of Labor)* was shut down. By the end of the week, writes Maximov, "not a single anarchist publication was left in the city."[17] Shortly afterwards, the Communists moved against anarchists in every region under their control. Maximov documents the progress of repression in late April and early May of 1918 as anarchists were rounded up, disarmed, and jailed, their publications suspended, and their clubs and communes destroyed.[18] "The blow," concludes Maximov, "was well-aimed and well-timed" to cripple the movement when it was "still in the stage of becoming—of self-determination."[19]

In late April, the Moscow Federation of Anarchists regrouped and relaunched *Anarkhiia* for a brief period—one of its early issues com-

memorated the raids with a poem ("That Day," reprinted at the end of this chapter) and a rough-hewn woodcut of a defiant anarchist raising the black standard—but in the new reality, anarchist organizations operated under threat of repression, with increasingly grave consequences.[20] This persecution succeeded in breaking up the anarchist ranks.[21] Some went underground to launch an anti-Communist bombing campaign that brought waves of arrests in 1919.[22] Others joined the Communist Red Army and fought against "Whites"; a number even served in the government as loyal "Soviet-Anarchists," only to be jailed in the early 1920s.[23] For a time, a Ukrainian anarchist insurrectionary army led by Nestor Makhno escaped the repression and provided refuge for those fleeing the Communist clamp-down, but when the civil war ended, it too was crushed.[24]

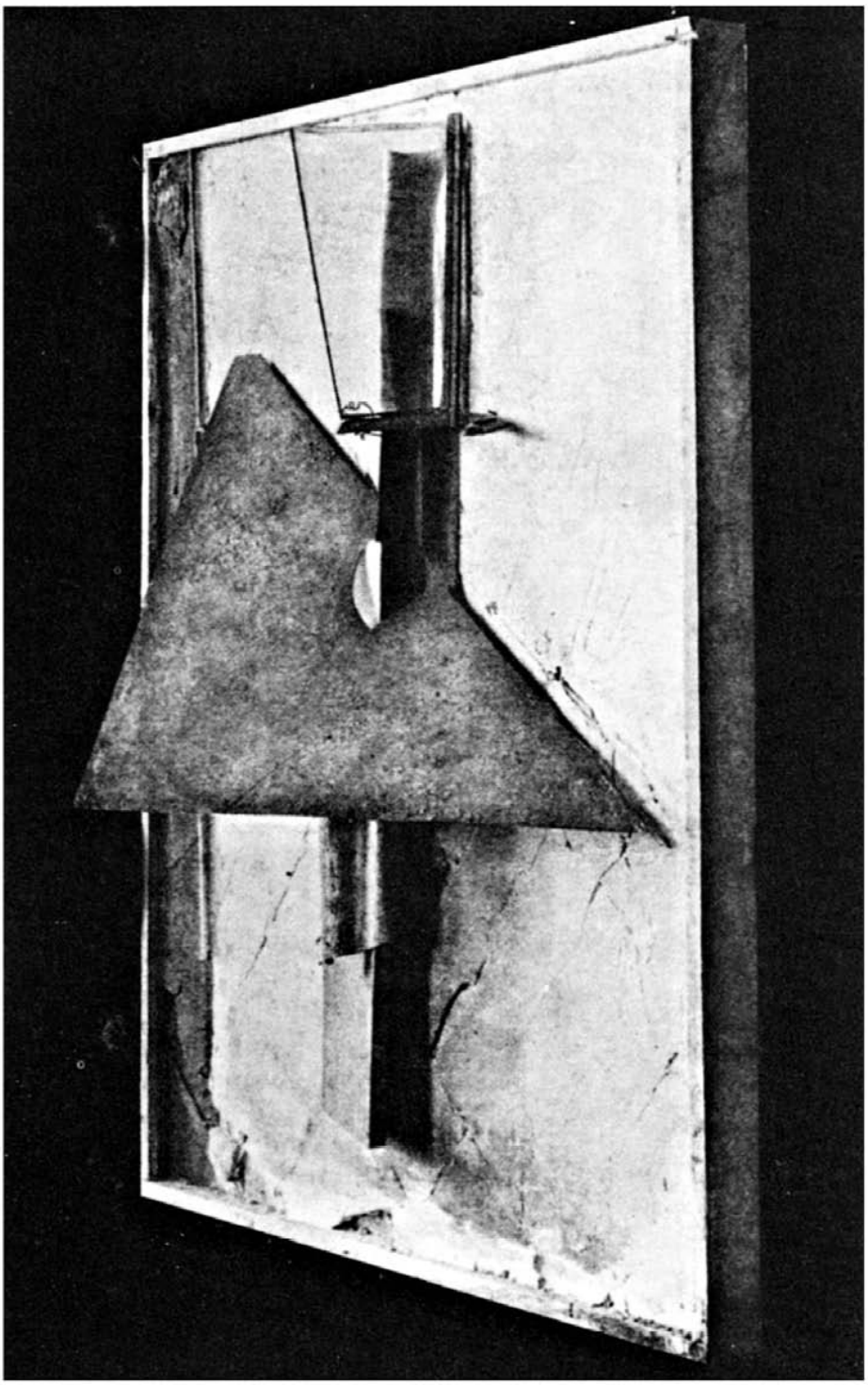
Who were the artists of the anarchist movement during these turbulent years? To Rodchenko's name, we can add a host of other avant-garde artists and theoreticians: Alexei Gan, who organized the House of Anarchy's "proletarian theater" group and championed the stage paintings of the sixteen-year-old anarchist baker, A. Lukashnin; Kazimir Malevich, leader of the suprematist school of painters; the non-objective painter Nadezhda Udalt'sova and Olga Rozanova (a suprematist); the poets Vladimir Mayaskovskii and Vasilii Kamenskii who, along with futurist painter David Burliuk, founded the anarchist "House of Free Art" club in Moscow; and Vladimir Tatlin, a trailblazing sculptor.[25]

The journal in which these artists debated the events of their time and art's relation to the revolution was *Anarkhiia*. Why they chose *Anarkhiia*, I would argue, is because the individualist, working-class orientation of both the journal and the Moscow Federation, which it represented, echoed the sentiments of the artists themselves. Take, for example, the "Open Letter to the Workers" and "Decree No. 1" which Burliuk, Mayaskovskii, and Kamenskii issued in their newspaper, *Gazeta Futuristov*, which published its first—and only—issue on March 15, 1918.[26] The Moscow Federation of Anarchists counted this newspaper among its publications and welcomed the group's House of Free Art—founded in late March in a requisitioned restaurant—as its

newest club (predictably, it was forced to close after the Cheka raids).[27] The "Open Letter" published in the *Gazeta* proclaimed that futurism was the artistic wing of "socialism/anarchism," and that a "revolution of the psyche" would overthrow the calcified artistic practises of bourgeois culture. "Decree No. 1 on the Democratization of Art" condemned art's confinement in upper-class "palaces, galleries, salons, libraries and theaters" and announced that spontaneous artistic expression—art in the streets—was the way forward.[28]

The libertarian initiatives of these artists were welcomed in the Moscow Federation; its secretary, Lev Chernyi, supported an "associational" anarchism based on the philosophy of Max Stirner.[29] Chernyi's position—that only the free association of people in federated groups could provide the foundation for an anarchist society—was shared by *Anarkhiia*'s editor, German Askarov.[30] In the previous chapter, I outlined the salient features of Max Stirner's anarchism, notably its materialistic rejection of metaphysics. I would add that among the classes of his day Stirner singled out the workers—the "unstable, restless, changeable" individuals who owed nothing to the state or capitalism—as the one segment of society capable of solidarity with those "intellectual vagabonds" who approached the condition of anarchistic egoism which he propagated.[31] Liberation for the workers did not lie in their consciousness of themselves as a class, as Marx claimed; it would only come if they embraced the egoistic attitude of the "vagabond" and shook off the social and moral conventions that yoked them to an exploitative order.[32] In other words, the true revolution lay in each worker's egoistic psyche: this would set the revolt against the state in motion. Once the struggle for a new, stateless order was underway, the vastness of the working class would ensure the bourgeoisie's defeat. "If *labor* becomes *free*," Stirner concluded, "the state is lost."[33] Hostility to abstract reasoning and bourgeois culture, militant individualism, and a belief in a new libertarian and working-class era: these positions defined the anarchism of the Moscow Federation. And in 1918, they set the terms for debating the relation of art to the anarchist revolution in the pages of *Anarkhiia*.

On March 25, 1918, *Anarkhiia* published a "Letter to Our Comrades,



Vladimir Tatlin, Selection of Materials: Iron, Stucco, Glass, Asphalt, *1914. Whereabouts unknown. From Punin,* Tatlin (protiv kubizma), *1921.*

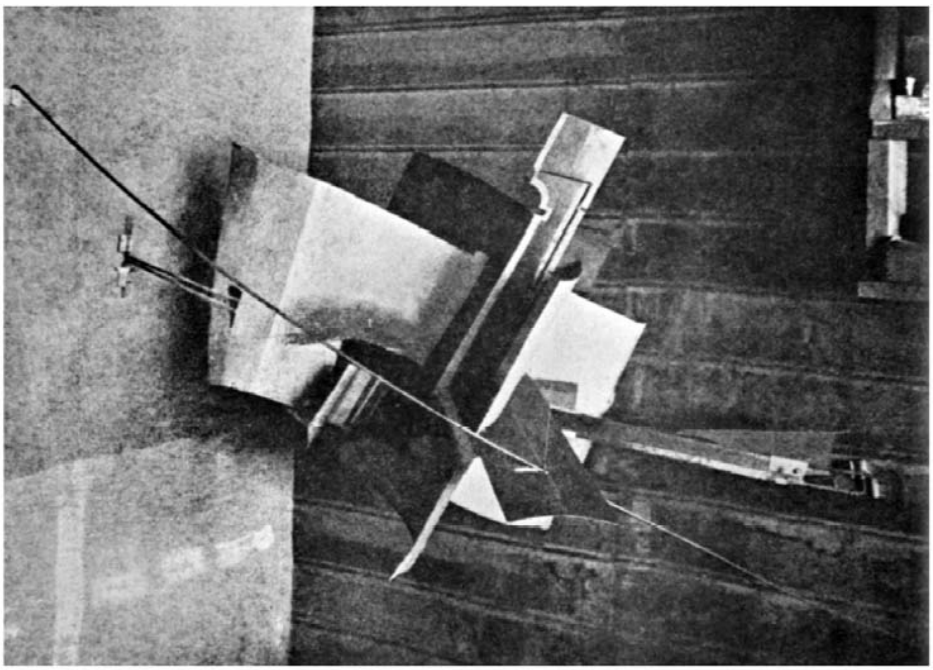
the Futurists" that resonated with the Federation's antipathy for the culture of the bourgeoisie and the role of art under its patronage. The author, Baian Plamen (a pseudonym), criticized "socially passive" Futurists in the anarchist ranks who proclaimed their radicalism while serving "the bourgeois way of life" by decorating the cafés of the wealthy and designing useless "artifacts."[34] This was a swipe at artists Rodchenko, Udalt'sova, and Tatlin, who, from July 1917 to January 1918, had designed and furnished a Moscow café-theater ("The Café of the Revolutionary City") for Nikolai Filippov, a wealthy capitalist who owned most of Moscow's bakeries. Under the direction of the Futurist Georgii Yakulov the artists renovated Filippov's haunt in the latest avant-garde style.[35] Rodchenko contributed hand-crafted lamps and other decorative elements; stylish tables and benches were made; and Tatlin and Udalt'sova organized the construction of relief elements projecting from the café's ceiling and walls.[36]

The establishment opened on January 30, 1918, and quickly became notorious as Moscow's most radical artistic experiment.[37] However, where the artists saw "revolution," Plamen saw a sellout. The criticism stung, and Tatlin quickly rushed to the defence with a rejoinder—"My Answer to 'Letter to the Futurists'"—in *Anarkhiia*'s March 29 issue. Tatlin's reply is important and worth quoting in full:

> I agree with you that the futurists are too busy with cafés and embroidery of various quality for emperors and ladies. I explain this by a 3/5 loss of focus in their artistic vision. Since 1912 I have been appealing to members of my profession to improve their eyesight. Having reconstructed corner and center reliefs of a superior type, I cast aside as unnecessary a number of 'isms'—the chronic sickness of contemporary art. I am waiting for well-equipped artistic 'depots' where an artist's psychic machine might be repaired as necessary. I appeal to all those in my guild to pass through the suggested gateway and throw off the old to admit a breath of anarchy.[38]

Tatlin concurred with Plemen that futurist art for the ruling class—"emperors and ladies"—was undesirable. He also condemned contemporary art's "isms" as a "sickness." Finally, he claimed to have discovered, in his art, a "gateway" for "throw[ing] off the old to admit a breath of anarchy." Tatlin was certainly familiar with the "isms" of the avant-garde. Prior to World War I, he had painted in a variety of modernist styles ranging from fauvism to cubism, but in the winter of 1913–1914, he developed a new form of relief sculpture that transformed the terms of avant-garde experimentation:

> Tatlin was very interested in analyzing the construction and architectonics of the world. He arrived at a fundamental artistic discovery [with the reliefs]; non-figurative forms of various colors and textures (*fakturas*) were removed from the surface of the picture into the space in front of the picture, at first without divorcing them from the plain background. The represented relation in space of each of these components of the picture was thus turned into the real context of each component, showing how they really relate in real space.... Tatlin called these kinds of compositions 'selections of materials' because the abstract picture that was turned into painterly relief was no longer painted with a brush but composed out of materials of various structural and painterly characteristics.
>
> The next step was to break away from the surface of the picture. Now the composition was involved with real space (in front of the surface that served as a backdrop, or in between two surfaces perpendicular to each other) and was supported only by a wire or a stiffly bent pivot. This was the first "sculpture without a pedestal," which at the same time inevitably showed architectural characteristics because of the real structural relations that developed between the various components of the construction. Tatlin called these creations counter-reliefs.[39]



Vladimir Tatlin, Corner Counter-Relief, *1914–15*. *Whereabouts unknown. From* Vladimir Evgrafovich Tatlin, *1915*.

The materialism of each element (surface, texture, color, etc.) in a work: this is the "gateway" through which Tatlin urged his comrades to pass. It remained for Rodchenko to give this passage an explicitly Stirnerist valiance.

In 1918, Rodchenko was well versed in Tatlin's ideas, having met the artist in 1915 and collaborated with him on numerous projects, including Filippov's café. He had also conducted his own experimentations with the properties of paint on canvas throughout 1915–17, and by 1918 this was the element he made his own. Here is Rodchenko's description of his paintings, published on April 28, 1918 in *Anarkhiia*:

> Designing vertical plane surfaces, painted a suitable color, and intersecting them with lines of depth, I discover that color serves merely as a useful convention for separating one plane

> from another, and for bringing out those elements which indicate depth and its intersections....
>
> Taking into consideration only the projections of principal and central lines very different from the parallel peripheral lines or those that enter in depth, I completely neglect both the quality and the combination of colors....
>
> Constructing projections on ovals, circles, and ellipses, I often distinguish only the extremities of the projections with color, which gives me the possibility of emphasizing the value of the projections and the color, used as an auxiliary means and not an end.
>
> By thoroughly studying the projection in depth, height, and breadth, I discover an infinite number of possibilities for construction outside the limits of time.[40]

During this same period, Kazimir Malevich, leader of the "suprematist" group of artists whose ranks included Rodchenko, was experimenting with the same painterly values in his own abstractions (see color plate 6). Malevich's non-objective style, first manifested in the form of a stark black square painted on a white background, was rooted in the metaphysical mysticism of theosophy and notions of a "fourth" dimension beyond the sensate third. Malevich argued that humanity was evolving toward a higher state of being that would unite us with all living things, and ultimately, the universe itself. Evoking the third dimensions of space and depth on two-dimensional surfaces using non-objective forms such as circles, triangles, squares, and lines, suprematist paintings functioned as an analogue for the perception of this "higher" dimension—a dimension apprehended by a consciousness that was irrational rather than rational, "felt" rather grasped analytically. The hallmark of this consciousness was "simultaneity"; freed of third-dimensional moorings, things once separate and distinct merged, defying all logic and common sense.[41] This illogic formed the

basis for the poetics of suprematism's most important literary allies, Alexei Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, who utilized transrational language (*zaum*) to create "unresolved dissonances" that tapped our inner psyche and opened us to "simultaneity."[42]

At the turn of the century, many radicals, anarchists included, mixed spirituality and politics. For Malevich and his cohorts, the Russian revolution signaled a breakthrough into suprematist consciousness, an idea he promoted in *Anarkhiia*, where he declaimed suprematist "egoism" as the visionary individualism of the anarchist revolution. For example, *Anarkhiia*'s March 27, 1918 issue featured a proclamation by Malevich entitled "To the New Limit":

> We are revealing new pages of art in anarchy's new dawns.... The ensign of anarchy is the ensign of our "ego," and our spirit, like a free wind, will make our creative work flutter in the broad spaces of the soul. You who are bold and young.... Wash off the touch of dominating authorities. And, clean, meet, and build the world in awareness of your day.[43]

Asserting the revolutionary hegemony of suprematism, Malevich was more than ready to take on his non-objectivist rivals. In the same issue of *Anarkhiia* (March 28) in which Tatlin's reply to "Plamen" appeared, he published his own "Reply" in which he blasted the futurists' "counter-revolutionary" activities and dismissed their anarchism as a "revolt" against existing conditions that paled in comparison with the suprematists' spiritual-artistic revolution, which had pushed humanity to "the limit of an absolutely new world."[44]

The year 1918 also saw Malevich embark on an unprecedented series of paintings. This cycle—his *White on White* paintings—was unveiled on April 27, 1919 at the "10th State Exhibition of Non-objective Creation and Suprematism" (see color plate 7). Malevich's accompanying statement on "Suprematism" elucidated the aim of his latest work.[45] Hitherto the suprematists had painted color forms floating against a white ground. Non-objective form and pure color had overcome the old artistic practice of representation and its methods

of color-mixing that simulated "things and objects." However, the persistence of color frustrated Malevich, because aesthetic deliberations over the arrangement of color were far removed from the higher suprematist state of mind.[46] Even if an artist's work was "constructed abstractly but based on color interrelations," Malevich wrote, his will would remain "locked up" by "the walls of aesthetic planes, instead of being able to penetrate philosophically."[47] The move to *White on White* broke through this limitation, liberating the artist to approach a revolutionary, suprematist consciousness in a medium from which the old world was finally, completely purged. Devoid of color, the *White on White* forms dissolved into a void and Malevich's egoist "will" was free to soar, uninhibited, beyond the known world:

> I am free only when—by means of critical and philosophical substantiation—my will can extract a substantiation of new phenomena from what already exists. I have breached the blue lampshades of color limitations, and have passed into the white beyond: follow me, comrade aviators!... The white free depths, eternity, is before you.[48]

As we have seen, Malevich was just as committed to the anarchist revolution as Rodchenko, however at the April 1919 exhibition it became clear to all concerned that Rodchenko's *Black on Black* paintings and his manifesto, "Rodchenko's System" (reprinted at the end of this chapter) were being pitted against Malevich's "Suprematism" statement and his *White on White* series. During the days leading up to the exhibition Rodchenko's wife and fellow non-objectivist, Varvara Stepanova, kept a diary where she discussed the critical purpose of Rodchenko's work. Throughout, Stepanova called Rodchenko "Anti," a pseudonym he used in *Anarkhiia*.[49]

The exhibition, wrote Stepanova, was "a contest between Anti and Malevich, the rest are rubbish. Malevich has hung five white canvases, Anti black ones."[50] Stepanova praised "Anti" for his powerful distillation of "pure painterly effects, without being obscured by incidental elements, not even by color." She also recorded her (and presumably

Rodchenko's) view of the implications the *Black on Black* series held for Malevich. "Anti's works" were "a new step in painting after suprematism.... The destruction of the square and a new form, the intensification of painting for its own sake, as a professional feature, a new interesting facture and just painting, not a smooth coating in a single color, the most unrewarding—black."[51] We can probe the anarchist foundations of the "destruction of the square"—clearly a reference to Malevich—through a reading of "Rodchenko's System" as a step-by-step process of egoistic affirmation and negation.[52]

"Rodchenko's System" opened with Stirner's most fundamental materialist axiom, "At the basis of my cause I have placed nothing,"[53] and its fifth aphorism was another passage from Stirner: "I devour it the moment I advance the thesis, and I am the 'I' only when I devour it.... The fact that I devour myself shows merely that I exist." These aphorisms are important for Rodchenko's manifesto, but to grasp their import we have to return, once more, to *The Ego and Its Own*.

In the previous chapter, we saw how positing the notion of an "I," as Stirner argued, assumed there was an absolute condition of "being" that transcended our uniqueness. Such "Absolute thinking," wrote Stirner, "is that thinking which forgets that it is ***my*** thinking, that *I* think, and that it exists only through ***me***. But I, as I, swallow up again what is mine, am its master; it is only my *opinion*, which I can at any moment *change*, i.e. annihilate, take back into myself and consume."[54] For Stirner, the sensuous, devouring ego was the irreducible core of uniqueness and the cornerstone of the mastering "I" that had no essence, that was, in effect, the "nothing" at the foundation of his philosophy. "I am not an ego along with other egos," wrote Stirner:

> I am unique. Hence my wants too are unique, and my deeds; in short, everything about me is unique. And it is only as this unique that I take everything for my own, as I set myself to work, and develop myself, only as this. I do not develop man, nor as man, but as I, I develop—myself.
>
> This is the meaning of the—*unique one*.[55]

Aleksandr Rodchenko, Black on Black #81, *1918. Oil on canvas. State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.*

Suprematism celebrated the evolution of a mystifying abstraction, humanity. Malevich's anarchist "ego" was a manifestation of a dawning collective consciousness that penetrated a realm which was unabashedly metaphysical. Far from asserting uniqueness, the transrationalism of Malevich and his poetic allies sought to break down the 'false' barriers separating the self from a hidden "fourth dimension" outside of time and the material world. In Stirnerist terms, this was just one more instance of groveling subservience to a mysterious "higher" condition apart from the self.

Quoting Stirner, Rodchenko set himself against all this. For his second aphorism ("colors disappear—everything merges into black"), he borrowed a passage from Kruchenykh's transrational play, *Gly-Gly*, in which Malevich and Kruchenykh both figured as dramatis personae.[56] Putting this "transrational" poet into service to trumpet his thesis was an egoistic put-down that would not have been lost on Malevich.

An aphorism from the German psychologist Otto Weininger's book *Uber die letzten Dinge* (1907) and two quotations from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) served the same end. Here, Rodchenko transformed Weininger's psychological insight into an elliptic commentary on himself. By "murdering" suprematism, he was achieving "self-justification" of a consummate egoistic sort, since, following Stirner, the "self" that justified the act was itself devoid of an "essence": it was the "nothing" that the "murderer" aspired to "prove." Finally, the Whitman passages, which praised the invigorating role death plays in the process of life, indicated that Rodchenko's "voyage of the soul" necessitated both creation (his paintings) and negation (again, suprematism) and introduced the affirmative section of "Rodchenko's System."

In the closing section, alluding to his debt to Tatlin, Rodchenko attributed his own "assent" to the downfall of all "isms" whose "funeral bells" were rung by the *Black on Black* series. From this point on, the motive of his work would be "invention (analysis)" utilizing the material constituents of the object ("painting is the body") to

"create something new from painting." Once through Tatlin's "gateway," Rodchenko stripped the canvas of metaphysics and distilled its base elements, the painterly "body" and the creative "spirit." Having mastered the "isms" of the avant-garde, he would now master painting itself, moment by moment, in a process of free invention. These were the qualities Stepanova celebrated in her diary, where she wrote that "Anti," the "analyst," and "inventor," created work that presented nothing but "painting." The *Black on Blacks* "[left] no room for color," and their *facture* gained an extraordinary presence as a result. In her diary, Stepanova related that the "lustrous, matt, flaky, uneven, smooth" surfaces of the *Black on Blacks* so impressed fellow anarchist Udal'tsova that she asked for one to be taken down so that she could feel it.[57] The exhibition, Stepanova concluded, was a tremendous success for "Anti" and "his mastery, his facture."[58]

In early 1919, Rodchenko celebrated his creative egoism, but could painterly anarchism combat terror, repression, and ideological assaults? Rodchenko's plight recalls the plaintive objections he once raised in *Anarkhiia* during the revolution's hopeful early days. Attending a meeting of the Communist-dominated "Proletarian Culture" organization, he heard a vitriolic speech on "proletarian art" from one "comrade Zalevskii" that condemned cubism and futurism as the "last word in bourgeois art" and the antithesis of working-class culture. The pre-revolutionary avant-garde, countered Rodchenko, were "daring inventors" who, though "hungry and starving" under the old order, had produced "revolutionary creations." The bourgeoisie "hated" the cubists and futurists because it "want[ed] to see only itself and its taste in the mirror of art." Now Zalevskii demanded that the workers emulate their oppressors. "But the worker," wrote Rodchenko, does not want to "strangle his brother, the rebellious artist." "I am sure," he concluded, "that working people want true creators, not submissive bureaucrats."[59] Rodchenko voiced his objections freely because he addressed a large working-class readership from the platform of a still-viable anarchist movement. Though beset by adversaries, he could still appeal to the readers of *Anarkhiia* for support and rally other art-

ists to the cause. But as Communist power progressed, these freedoms were shut down.

Rodchenko's capitulation came in March of 1921, when he, Gan, and Stepanova joined with Konstantin Medunetskii, Karl Ioganson, Gregorii Stenberg, and Vladimir Stenberg to form "The First Working Group of Constructivists." The group drew up a manifesto wherein they dedicated themselves to "Soviet construction" guided by "scientific communism, based on the theory of historical materialism." Repudiating artistic anarchism circa 1918, they declared that art had no role to play in the "social production of the future culture" because "it arose from the mainstreams of individualism."[60]

Arguably, the date of this declaration—March 18—was not coincidental. The night before, the Communist Party had crushed the last flicker of resistance to its rule at the island fortress of Kronstandt, where an anarchist-led soviet had called for a revolution against the Communist dictatorship and then held out for sixteen days until its rebellious inhabitants were subdued by Red Army detachments.[61] Alarmed by anarchist involvement in the rebellion, the Cheka swept the streets of Russia, throwing hundreds of anarchists, including Askarov and Chernyi, into prison.[62] Plainly, the time was ripe for a retreat into Marxist orthodoxy.

The following accompanied the exhibition of Rodchenko's Black on Black *paintings in 1919:*

Rodchenko's System

At the basis of my cause I have placed nothing.
—M. Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*

Colors disappear—everything merges into black.
—A. Kruchenykh, *Gly-Gly*

Muscle and pluck forever!
What invigorates life invigorates death,
And the dead advance as much as the living advance.
—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Murder serves as a self-justification for the murderer; he thereby aspires to prove that nothing exists.
—Otto Weininger, *Aphorisms*

... I devour it the moment I advance the thesis, and I am the "I" only when I devour it.... The fact that I devour myself shows merely that I exist.
—M. Stirner

Gliding o'er all, through all,
Through Nature, Time, and Space,
As a ship on the waters advancing,
The voyage of the soul—not life alone,
Death, many deaths I'll sing.
—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

The downfall of all the "isms" of painting marked the beginning of my ascent.

To the sound of the funeral bells of color painting, the last "ism" is accompanied on its way to eternal peace, the last love and hope collapse, and I leave the house of dead truths. The motive power is not synthesis but invention (analysis). Painting is the body, creativity, the spirit. My business is to create something new from painting, to examine what I practice practically. Literature and philosophy are for the specialists in these areas, but I am the inventor of new discoveries in painting.

Christopher Columbus was neither a writer nor a philosopher, he was merely the discoverer of new countries.

—Aleksandr Rodchenko, "Rodchenko's System," Tenth State Exhibition: Non-objective Creation and Suprematism, Moscow, 1919

"That Day"

Shots.
Shots.
A crackling machine gun.
Again.
Guns!
God! What is it? Why?
●ctober; its the same as then.
5 a.m.
Morning.
Jump out of bed.
Devils. Don't know. What they crushed.
The Clubs.
People, dull and rude.
Don't know
who
they
killed.
They're bandits—they say.—Criminal dirt,
gathered at midnight.
People.
Can't [see]
their
faces.

—published in *Anarkhiia* (April 23, 1918)

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

All citations from *Anarkhiia* are from the New York Public Library holding unless otherwise noted.

1 Aleksandr Rodchenko, "O Muzei Morozova, II," *Anarkhiia*, n.d. This was the second section of a two-part article. April 12, 1918 saw the first wave of raids on anarchist centers throughout Moscow. The raid on the Morozov mansion fits that pattern: the artists were awakened at night by armed detachments, rounded up with the anarchists occupying the building, and shipped off for interrogation.

2 With the notable exception of the German art historian Hubertus Gassner. See Hubertus Gassner, "The Constructivists: Modernism on the Way to Modernization," *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915–1932*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1992): 298–319.

3 Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 182.

4 Ronald I. Kowalski, *The Bolshevik Party in Conflict: The Left Opposition of 1918* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991): 146–154.

5 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 182.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 183.

8 Gregorii Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work* (Chicago: Alexander Berkman Memorial Fund, 1940): 406.

9 Ibid., 408.

10 Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 40; Aleksandr Rodchenko, "O Muzei Morozova," *Anarkhiia*, n.d.

11 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 184.

12 "The April Pogrom in Moscow" in Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 383–393.

13 "Release of the Extraordinary Committee to Struggle Against the Counter-Revolution (Cheka)," *Znamia Truda* (April 13, 1918) in Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 383.

14 "An Official Communication," *Znamia Truda* (April 13, 1918) in Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 384–385.

15 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 184.

16 Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 357.

17 Ibid., 356.

18 "Pogroms Follow in Petrograd and in the Provinces," in Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 396–404.

19 Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 410.

20 "Tot' Den'," *Anarkhiia*, (April 23, 1918). The artist and poet are not identified. Avrich writes that the cycle of arrests, executions, and imprisonments intensified in 1919, and that by 1920 "the Cheka dragnet had swept the entire country," effectively snuffing out the anarchist movement. *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, Paul Avrich, ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Paperbacks, 1973): 138.

21 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 189–195.

22 Ibid., 188–189.

23 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 200–203. In November 1921, the Moscow headquarters of the Soviet–Anarchists was raided and its leaders jailed. "The Persecution of the Anarchist Universalists" in Maximov, *The Guillotine at Work*, 503–505.

24 Anarchist collaborations with the Bolsheviks are discussed in Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 196–203. For a history of the Ukrainian anarchist insurrection and its subsequent repression, see Peter Arshinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918–1921)*, Lorraine and Freddy Perlman, trans. (Detroit: Black and Red, 1974): passim.

25 Gassner, "The Constructivists," *The Great Utopia*, 303. I have gleaned Gan's activities from the pages of *Anarkhiia*. One issue advertised a lecture series to take place at the "House of Anarchy" beginning on March 25, 1918 in which Gan would lecture on "Art and Proletarian Theatre." Among the other speakers were Lev Chernyi, whose topics were the "History of Culture. Social History. Sociology. Associational Anarchism," and one of the Gordin brothers, who discussed the "Ethical Basis of Anarchism;" "Bezplathye kursy po anarkhizmy," *Anarkhiia*, n.d. Gan's article on "comrade Lukashin" includes a self-portrait by the young artist and an example of one of his paintings for the proletarian theater production of Leonid Andreyva's play *Savvy* (1906). The play's anarchist hero sought to annihilate everything because the world was so corrupt no rehabilitation of the social order was possible—an interesting commentary on the attitude of the Federation of Anarchists at this juncture. Lukashin also belonged to the anarchist "Initiatory Group" whose members included Rodchenko and Tatlin; A[lexci].G[an]., "Tovarishch' Lukashin'," *Anarkhiia*, n.d. The membership of Rodchenko and Tatlin is documented in an undated letter to the "Federal Council of Anarchist Groups" signed by V. Tatlin, A. Rodchenko, and A. Morgunov in German Karginov, *Rodchenko* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979): 60.

26 Gassner, "Constructivists," *The Great Utopia*, 303.

27 Ibid.

28 "Decree No. 1 on the Democratization of Art," *Gazeta futuristov* (March 15, 1918) in Gassner, "Constructivists," 303.

29 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 177. Chernyi's book on "Associational Anarchism" includes two chapters dealing with anarchist egoism and collectivism; Lev Chernyi, *Novoe Napravlenie v Anarkhizme: Asosiatsionnii Anarkhism* (Moscow: 1907; 2nd ed., New York, 1923): passim.

30 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 177.

31 Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 148–149.

32 Stirner, 152.

33 Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, 361.

34 A.A. Strigalev and L.A. Zhadova, "Notes on Baian Plamen [pseudonym], 'Open Letter to the Futurists'," *Anarkhiia* (March 25, 1918) in *Tatlin*, Larissa Alekseevna Zhadova, ed." (New York: Rizzoli, 1988): 185.

35 Karginov, *Rodchenko*, 91.

36 John Miller, *Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 127–28.

37 Karginov, *Rodchenko*, 92.

38 Vladimir Tatlin, "My Answer to 'Letter to the Futurists,'" *Anarkhiia* (March 29, 1918) in *Tatlin*, Zhadova, ed., 185.

39 A.A. Strigalev, "From Painting to the Construction of Matter," in *Tatlin*, Zhadova, ed., 19.

40 Aleksandr Rodchenko, "The Dynamism of Planes," *Anarkhiia* (April 28, 1918) in Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Rodchenko; The Complete Work*, Vieri Quillici, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987): 32, note 10.

41 In suprematist theory, the passage of time as experienced in the third dimension was actually movement in the fourth, hence time was a fiction. Evoking the idea of two-dimensional forms moving into three dimensions alluded to our own movement in fourth-dimensional "hyperspace." Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidian Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 274–299.

42 Charlotte Douglas, "Views from the New World: or A. Kruchenykh and K. Malevich: Theory and Painting," *The Ardis Anthology of Russian Futurism*, Ellendea Proffer and Carl R. Proffer, eds. (Ann Arbor: Ardis Press, 1980): 361–362.

43 Kazimir Malevich, "To the New Limit," *Anarkhiia* 28 (March 27, 1918) in K.S. Malevich, *Essays on Art: 1915–1933: Vol. 1*, Troels Andersen, ed. (London: Rapp and Whitling, 1968): 56.

44 Kazimir Malevich, "Reply," *Anarkhiia* 29 (March 29, 1918) in Malevich, *Essays on Art: Vol. 1*, 52–54.

45 Kazimir Malevich, "Suprematism," *Statements from the Catalogue of the "Tenth State Exhibition: Nonobjective Creation and Suprematism"* in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934*, John E. Bowlt, ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1976): 143–145.

46 Ibid., 144.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 *Aleksandr Rodchenko: Experiments for the Future: Diaries, Essays, Letters, and Other Writings*, Alexander N. Larentiev, ed. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002): 134, note 27.

50 Vavara Stepanova, "Notes from the Diary on the Preparation and Management of the Tenth and Nineteenth State Exhibitions," entry April 10, 1919 in *The Future is Our Only Goal*, Peter Noever, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991): 124.

51 Stepanova, "Notes," entry April 10, 1919, 124.

52 Aleksandr Rodchenko, "Rodchenko's System," *Tenth State Exhibition* in Bowlt, ed., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, 149–151.

53 Translated as "All things are nothing to me" in Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 3.

54 Ibid., 453.

55 Ibid., 482–483.

56 John Bowlt ed., *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, 305, note 2.

57 Stepanova, "Notes," entry April 10, 1919 in Noever, 125.

58 Stepanova, "Notes," entry April 29, 1919 in Noever, 126.

59 Aleksandr Rodchenko, "O doklad' T. Zalevskago v Proletkult'," *Anarkhiia*, n.d.

60 "First Program of the Working Group of Constructivists" manifesto cited in Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1983): 94.

61 Avrich, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, 156.

62 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 230–231.

Chapter 5

Death to Art!

The Post-Anarchist Aftermath

The old bureaucratism has been smashed,
but bureaucrats still remain.
—Joseph Stalin (April 1919)[1]

What do revolutionary artists do after they renounce anarchism? In the Soviet Union, the newly minted constructivists numbered amongst the most militant pro-Communist groups in the spectrum of post-revolution culture. The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops (Vkhutemas), founded in 1921, served as their base of operations through the 1920s (the workshops were closed in 1930).[2] The Communist Party was firmly in control of the state apparatus; and from this point forward, artistic affairs were monitored through the cultural institutions of the government, which channelled money into art schools and served as the major patron for art commissions.

What distinguished the constructivists from others in the cultural scene was their outspoken rejection of traditional art-making.[3] Vavara Stepanova's lecture on "The General Theory of Constructivism" (December 22, 1921) pinpoints the salient features, and the ways in which the artistic politics of anarchism were reworked to accord with the group's Marxism. Constructivism was codified as an anti-art movement which rejected the creation of art objects such as paintings and sculpture, as well as any role for aesthetics in "intellectual production."[4] Traditionally, art was a product of "the illusions of individual

consciousness" and served no social role apart from establishing "an ideal of beauty for a given epoch."[5] In the pre-revolutionary era, however, not all artists were caught up in the snare of aesthetics and idealism. Stepanova singled out the rise of an "analytical method" among certain avant-garde artists which revealed, for the first time, the art medium's materialistic foundations. "Art stopped being representational" thanks to the artists' "revolutionary-destructive activity, which stripped art down to its basic elements," thus causing "changes in the consciousness of those who work in art by confronting them with the problem of construction as a practical necessity."[6] In sum, Tatlin's relief sculptures and Rodchenko's *Black on Black* canvases were "cleansed" of their anarchist content by way of theoretical omission. "Once art has been purged of its aesthetical, philosophical, and religious tumours," wrote Stepanova, "we are left with its material bases, which will henceforth be organized by intellectual production."[7]

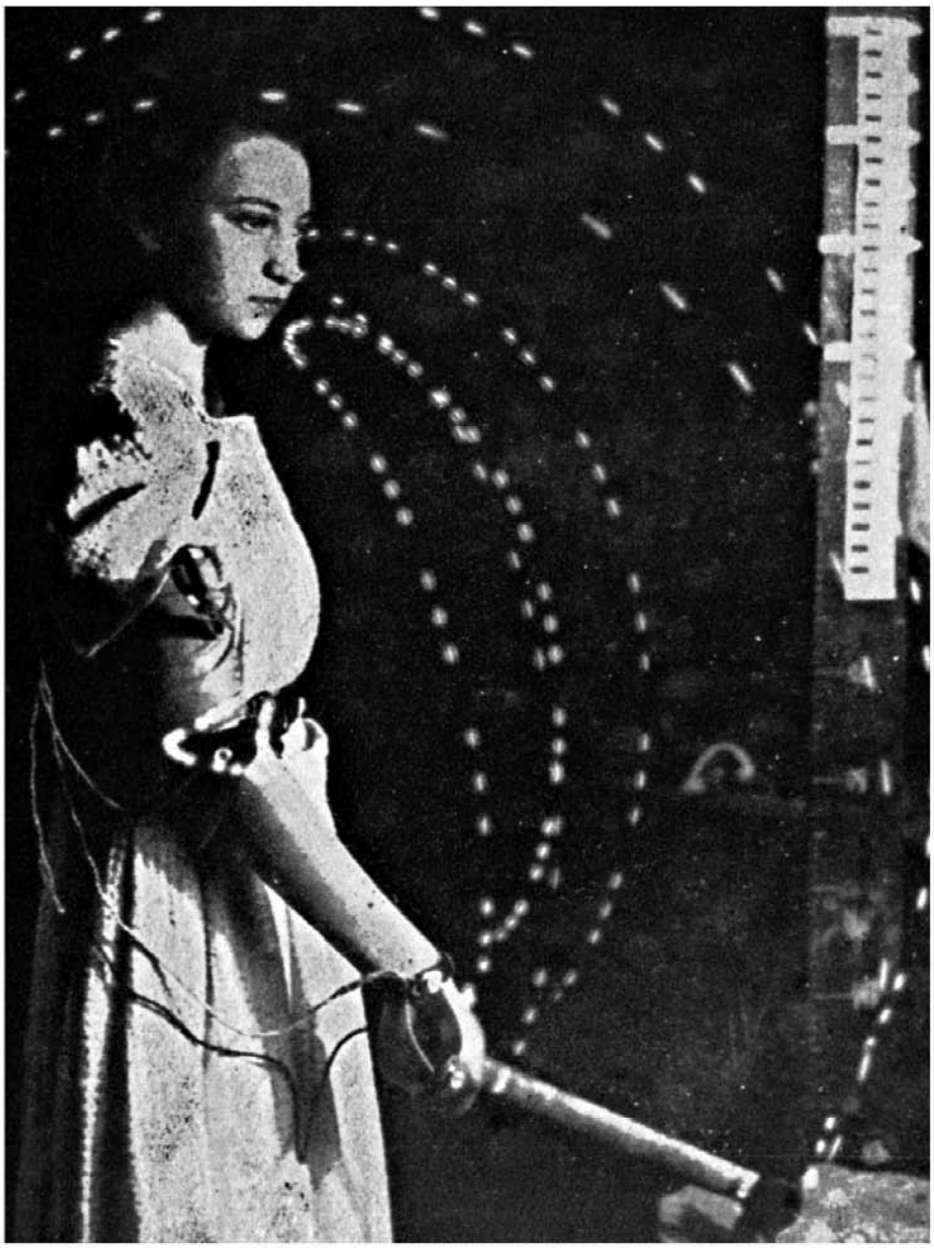
In his capacity as chief theoretician of the nascent movement, Alexei Gan took the same tack in his major statement, *Constructivism* (1922).[8] Dating constructivism's rise to the Communist coup—"October 25, 1917"—Gan roundly condemned art-making, past and present. "All so-called art," he wrote, "is permeated with the most reactionary idealism, is the product of extreme individualism" and "the hypocrisy of bourgeois culture." Declaiming "DEATH TO ART!" in capital letters, he banished painting and sculpture, along with capitalism and individualism, to the pre-October era.[9] Of course, the history of art in the post-October anarchist movement problematized this maneuver, but no matter. In the era of the revolution, Gan argued, there had been "tendencies" amongst the avant-garde toward "the pure mastery of artistic labor of intellectual-material production." Those who instigated them, however, had never managed "to sever the umbilical cord that still held and joined them to the traditional art of the Old Believers [a reactionary sect of Russian Orthodoxy]. Constructivism has played the role of midwife."[10] Midwife to what? "The practical reality of the Soviet system" that was the constructivist's "school, in which they carry out endless experiments tirelessly and unflinchingly."[11]

In the early years, constructivism's baby steps consisted of solving

hypothetical problems. Rodchenko's *Oval Hanging Spatial Construction no. 12* (ca 1920), for example, was an exercise in design which exploited the object's materials to realize a given problem with the maximum of economy. Rodchenko created this work using a single sheet of plywood, out of which he cut a series of concentric circles. Economy of construction was matched by the ease with which the three-dimensional object could be collapsed down into two-dimensions and stored.[12] The constructivists later referred to this period of experimentation as their "laboratory" phase.[13] The next step was to merge constructivist activity with industry so that technology and the real demands of the factory floor would dictate the design and purpose of the product. This phase got underway in the mid-1920s at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops. For example, Rodchenko and his students worked on designs for mass-produced, multipurpose furniture that maximized space usage in ultra-efficient workers' apartments and clubs.[14] For her part, Stepanova taught in the textile faculty of the school, designed sports and factory uniforms, and took on a commission to design fabrics in a local factory in order to master the technologies of clothes production and dyeing. Throughout the 1920s, constructivist activity branched out into graphic design, architecture, and many other endeavors.[15]

In Communist theory, industrialism was the materialist base from which Russia's working class had emerged and upon which Soviet socialism would be built under the Party's disciplining guidance.[16] It followed that during the 1920s, the drive to reorganize society in the mirror image of industry, "socialized" and regimented, was enthusiastically embraced by the constructivists. In this regard, no better example exists than constructivist theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold's staging of *The Magnanimous Cuckold* in 1922.

Meyerhold was a well-known radical who had joined the Communist Party in 1918 and produced plays for the Red Army during the revolution. Recalled to Moscow in 1920 to help administer state theater programs, he was appointed director, in autumn 1921, of the newly formed State Higher Theater Workshops, sister organization to the Higher Artistic and Technical Workshops.[17] Hundreds of students



Alexei Gastev, Scientific Management Motion Study Photograph, *ca 1925. From Rene Fulop-Miller,* The Mind and Face of Bolshevism, *1927.*

enrolled in the workshops, in which Meyerhold introduced constructivist principles into staging, and a new acting methodology called "Biomechanics" to his training program. Many of Meyerhold's students worked in factories during the day and trained and performed for his theater in the evening.[18] The goal was to suffuse his productions with working-class content, giving them the requisite cultural stamp that would set them apart from pre-revolutionary theater.

"Biomechanics" was based on techniques of movement then being promoted under the direction of the Communist bureaucrat and "proletarian poet," Alexei Gastev.[19] Gastev spearheaded a state-financed program to introduce the latest form of labor organization, known as scientific management, to the Soviet workforce. Developed in America, scientific management, also known as "Taylorism" after its founder, Frederick Winslow Taylor, was a system of labor coordination which trained workers in efficiency of movement, breaking down work into easily executed tasks which enabled managers to speed up the pace of production exponentially.[20] The movement generated a whole new layer of white collar management while at the same time facilitating the super-exploitation of workers through piece-work pay scales, impossible-to-achieve production targets, and on-the-job deskilling which destroyed trade unions. The authoritarian cultural values of scientific management are reflected in the intensified supervision of the worker, whose entire workday was under the thumb of one or more managers.[21] Work was restructured around efficiency standards gained through the scientific study of exemplary laborers; for example, the movements of prize-winning speed typists were studied to determine the most efficient hand positions and related tasks such as the placement and insertion of typing paper.[22]

Armed with such standards, ambitious scientific management teams proposed to transform the workplace and keep it running smoothly ever after. Filmed motion studies were an additional aid: timers determined the quickest movements, which were then recreated in three-dimensional models to assist training; light devices were attached to the body to facilitate the recording of movement. Another means of regis-

Alexei Gastev, n.d. Photograph.

tering efficiency was to photograph movements with a timer attached to the light device; faster, more efficient movements left shorter dots of light. All the above methodologies were employed in the Soviet Union, where Gastev transformed scientific management into a mass movement.

He set to work with the express blessings of Lenin and Leon Trotsky, both of whom were scientific management boosters. Trotsky, while head of the Red Army, was notorious for imposing scientific management and military-style organization in factories to maintain production during the revolution. To do so, he drew from a pool of well-paid managers imported from America and Europe, as well as home-grown experts, including Gastev.[23] Praising scientific management for its disciplinary qualities in January 1920, Trotsky argued:

> A whole number of features of militarism blend with what we call Taylorism. Compare the movements of a crowd and a military unit, one marching in ranks, the other in a disorderly way, and you'll see the advantage of an organized military formation. And so the positive, creative forces of Taylorism should be used and applied.[24]

Later that March, at the 9th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Trotsky proposed augmenting the imposition of scientific man-

agement in the workplace by disciplining workers through blacklisting, penal battalions, and concentration camps.[25]

Lenin, who had studied scientific management before the war, shared Trotsky's enthusiasm.[26] In "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (April 28, 1918)—issued, we should note, in the immediate wake of the anti-anarchist Cheka raids—he wrote: "The possibility of building socialism will be determined precisely by our success in combining the Soviet government with the Soviet organization of administration with the modern achievements of capitalism. We must organize in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our purposes."[27] To this end, he supported the creation of a Central Institute of Labor in 1920, with Gastev at the helm. During the 1920s, the Institute played an integral role in the introduction of scientific management throughout the industrial infrastructure.[28]

We can gauge Gastev's extremism from articles published during the civil war years. Gastev hailed scientific management as the organizational counterpart to machine production, and predicted a new Communist man would emerge from rationally organized production. Under a regime of scientific management, he wrote, "machines would be transformed from the managed into the managers" and norms established scientifically would permeate the life of the proletariat, right down to "aesthetic, mental, and sexual needs."[29] He imagined the coming Communist society operating as a single industrial unit. Mechanized workers would be directed by an equally mechanized "special staff of engineers, designers, instructors, and head draftsmen who would work with the same regularity as the rest of the giant factory."[30] "We must fearlessly state," he wrote, "that it is absolutely necessary for the present-day worker to mechanize his manual labor; that is, he must make his gestures resemble those of a machine.... Only the creation of a collective rhythm will provide the conditions for objective leadership."[31] The goal?

> ... *mechanized collectivism.* The manifestations of this mechanized collectivism are so foreign to personality, so anonymous, that the movement of these collective complexes is similar to the movement of things, in which there is no longer any individual face but only regular uniform steps and faces devoid of expression, of a soul, of lyricism of emotion, measured not by the shout or a smile but by a pressure gauge or a speed gauge.[32]

This Marxist vision, in which individualism (anarchist or otherwise) was totally effaced by industrialized collectivism, struck a chord with the constructivists, including Meyerhold.[33] Gastev's connections with Meyerhold are clear enough. During the 1920s, both men sat on the board of a scientific management propaganda organization called the League of Time, and Meyerhold produced time-management propaganda plays that toured the Soviet Union as part of the "Living Newspaper" theater program.[34] Indeed, the "biomechanical" training methods practiced in Meyerhold's theater were indebted to Gastev's studies, as Meyerhold himself acknowledged.[35] On June 11, 1922, Gastev published an article in which he called for the study of "that magnificent machine" the human organism through "a special science, biomechanics," in "laboratory" conditions.[36] Meyerhold's theater was just such a laboratory, where the new regimes of movement for the workplace were collectivized into highly mechanized performances. In an interview, Meyerhold described biomechanics as the application of "the Taylor system" to acting, which was analogous to the labor of a skilled worker.[37] This made theater useful in the building of socialism: biomechanics was disciplined training for the factory floor.[38] His statement on "Biomechanics," published on June 12, 1922, goes further, evoking constructivism as a methodological foundation:

> The work of the actor in an industrial society will be regarded as a means of production vital to the proper organization of labor of every citizen of that society.... In art our constant concern is the organization of raw material. Constructivism has

" VICTORY IS STILL AHEAD OF US "
(Gastev)

Scientific Management Poster, Victory is Still Ahead of Us (Portrait of Alexei Gastev), *ca 1925. From Rene Fulop-Miller*, The Mind and Face of Bolshevism, *1927.*

> forced the artist to become both artist and engineer. Art should be based on scientific principles; the entire creative act should be a conscious process. The art of the actor consists in organizing his material: that is, in his capacity to utilize correctly his body's means of expression. The actor embodies in himself both organizer and that which is organized.... The actor must train his material (the body) so that it is capable of executing instantaneously those tasks that are dictated externally (by the actor, the director).[39]

The constructivist imperative to do away with pre-revolutionary theatrics ("the 'inspirational' method and the method of 'authentic emotions'") and merge with industrialism determined not only the scientific method of acting, but also the features of the *Magnanimous Cuckold* theater set.[40] The set was designed at Meyerhold's request by Luibov Popova, a suprematist turned constructivist who taught "color construction" at Vhukutemas and "material formation" at Meyerhold's school.[41] Popova did away with the conventional illusionism of staging in favor of the needs of the performance. Her utilitarian set was stripped of embellishment, to create an efficient workspace for the unfolding biomechanical action. In this sense, it was just like a factory interior—devoid of decorative features and designed for maximum efficiency of production.[42]

Even props played a productive role. Popova's stage helped to regulate the movements of the actors during a performance. The set featured giant wheels that periodically sped up and slowed down, and the motions of the worker-actors echoed the tempo set by Popova's revolving wheels, which mirrored the pace of the performance. In effect, the stage worked like a machine in a factory assembly line: in a factory, the machine regulates the pace of work, and the workers have to keep up with it. What we have, then, is a merger of constructivist principles of design with the creation of an actor-worker whose bodily efficiency emulated that of the factory.[43] *The Magnanimous Cuckold*

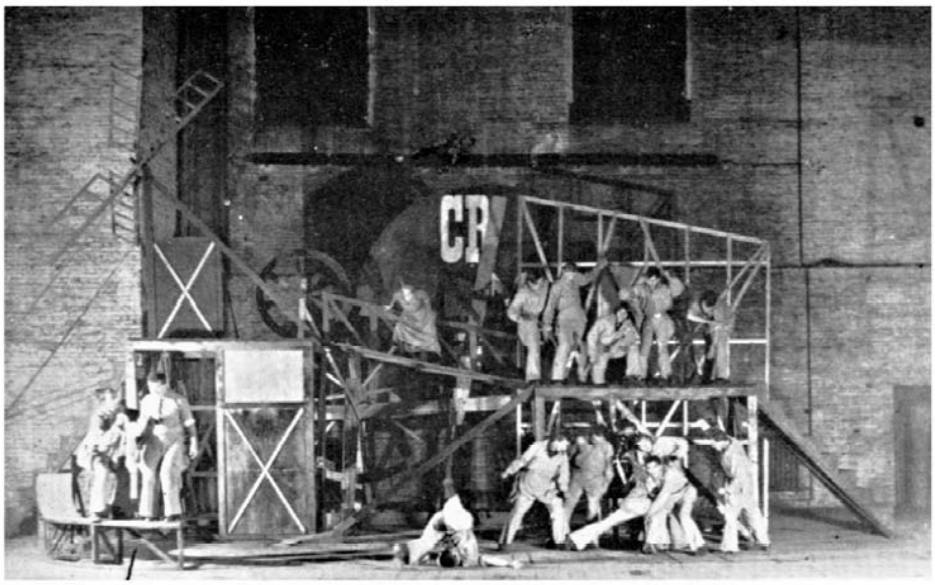
Liubov Popova, 1919. Photograph.

was a spectacular success and led to further collaborations with Popova, Stepanova (who designed stage sets and costumes), and the constructivist architect Alexandr Vesnin.[44]

Theatrical achievements aside, with Gastev at the helm, scientific management swept through the Soviet economy, bringing piecework quotas that could be adjusted by the management as it saw fit and thousands of "efficiency experts" to rationalize, control, and manage. A report in early 1925 observed "at present there exists no branch of state activity" where the principles of scientific management had not "penetrated."[45] As the regime thrust forward, workers resisted—one newspaper reported in 1928 a "serious anti-rationalization mood," as evidenced by instances of workplace sabotage, plant occupations, and the forcible eviction of managers, who also had bricks thrown at them.[46] However "labor discipline" only intensified under the command economy of five year plans (1928–1933; 1933–1937) when "piecework rates were dropped below the level necessary for the minimal decencies of life" and "sixteen to seventeen hour" work days, including "voluntary work on holidays" was the rule.[47]

Scientific management as celebrated by the constructivists went hand-in-hand with brutal exploitation right down the social pyramid, but that didn't save the movement. In the early 1930s, socialist realism—representational art infused with Communist-dictated "socialist content"—came to the fore, and the Soviet art community was thinned by waves of purges targeting prominent figures for past deviations from the new artistic line.[48] Amongst the constructivists, Meyerhold

Liubov Popova, Stage Set for The Magnanimous Cuckold, *Meyerhold Theater, Moscow, 1922.*



Liubov Popova, Stage Set for The Magnanimous Cuckold, *Meyerhold Theater, Moscow, 1922.*

was arrested in 1939 and tortured into confessing involvement in an "anti-Soviet" conspiracy during the production of *The Magnanimous Cuckold.* Tried in secret, he was shot on February 2, 1940. Popova escaped this fate, having died of natural causes in 1924. Alexei Gan was shot in 1942. Tatlin reverted to producing innocuous portraits and flower paintings (he died in 1953). Gastev was arrested in 1938 and died in prison in 1941. As for Stepanova (d. 1958) and Rodchenko (d. 1956), they survived by retreating into designing propaganda books and magazines—this despite the fact that in the early 1930s, Rodchenko had made a great show of denouncing his former artistic "errors" and praising forced labor camps (which he photographed) for their "rehabilitating" role.[49] How far "Anti" had fallen from his anarchist days can be gauged by his actions during a purge which swept through the higher echelons of Soviet Uzbekistan. In 1934, Rodchenko was commissioned to design an illustrated album, *Ten Years of Uzbekistan*, commemorating a decade of Communist Party rule. This book, published in Russian and Uzbek, included glowing profiles of careerists like Yakov Peters, a sadistic former Chekaist who had overseen the repression of "counter-revolutionaries" in St. Petersburg during 1919.[50] The purge of the Uzbek leadership began in 1937 and lasted through 1938. (Yakov, for example, was arrested and shot in 1938.) Upon learning of each arrest, Rodchenko dutifully ruined his personal copy of *Ten Years of Uzbekistan* by "disappearing" the victim in thick black ink.[51] "Death to Art!" had reached its apogee.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1 Stalin quoted in Mark R. Beissinger, *Scientific Management, Socialist Discipline and Soviet Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988): 19.
2 See the definative study on constructivism; Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 112.
3 The largest artists' organization of the period, the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (1922–1932), practiced painting and sculpture in a realist style, as did lesser groups such as the Society of Easel Painters and the New Society of Painters. See Brandon Taylor, "On AkhRR," *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One Party State, 1917–1992*, Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993): 51–72.
4 Varvara Stepanova, "The General Theory of Constructivism," (December 22, 1921) in Noever, 174.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 177.
8 Gan's role is discussed in Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 68.
9 Alexei Gan, *Constructivism* (1922) in *The Tradition of Constructivism*, Stephen Bann, ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1974): 36–37.
10 Ibid., 41.
11 Ibid., 40.
12 See Lodder, 24–29.
13 Ibid., 7.
14 Ibid., 133–139.
15 Ibid., 147–152, 263.
16 See V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (April 28, 1918), quoted in Maurice Brinton, *The Bolsheviks and Worker's Control* (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1975): 40–41.
17 Edward Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1998): 160, 171.
18 Lancelot Lawton, *The Russian Revolution* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1927): 376.
19 Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, 172.
20 Judith A. Merkle, *Management and Ideology: The Legacy of the International Scientific Management Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 11–15.
21 Ibid., 75–80.
22 Frank B. Gilbreth and L. M. Gilbreth, *Applied Motion Study: A Collection of Papers on the Efficient Method to Industrial Preparedness* (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1917): 37.
23 Beissinger, 32.
24 Leon Trotsky quoted in ibid.
25 Ibid.

26 Merkle, 105–109.
27 Lenin quoted in Merkle, 113.
28 Beissinger, 37–44.
29 Gastev quoted in Beissinger, 33.
30 Gastev quoted in Kurt Johannson, *Aleksej Gastev: Proletarian Bard of the Machine Age* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1983): 62.
31 Gastev quoted in ibid., 61–62.
32 Gastev quoted in Kendell E. Bailes, "Alexei Gastev and the Soviet Controversy over Taylorism, 1918–24," *Soviet Studies* 29 (July 1977): 378.
33 Catherine Cook, *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture, and the City* (London: Academy Group, 1995): 112.
34 Beissinger, 54–55.
35 Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, 172.
36 Johannson, 113.
37 Lawton, 375.
38 Ibid.
39 Vsevolod Meyerhold, "Biomechanics" (June 12, 1922), in *Meyerhold on Theatre*, Edward Braun, ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969): 199.
40 Ibid.
41 Dmitri V. Sarabianov and Natalia L. Adaskina, *Popova* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990): 198–200.
42 Luihov Popova, "Discussion of the Magnanimous Cuckold" (April 27, 1922), in *Popova*, 378.
43 Ibid., 378–379.
44 Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, 184–185, 195.
45 Beissinger, 84.
46 Ibid., 89.
47 Merkle, 132.
48 Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): passim.
49 Alexandr Rodchenko, "Reconstructing the Artist" (1936), in Larentiev, 237–304.
50 David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997), 133.
51 Ibid., 126–133.

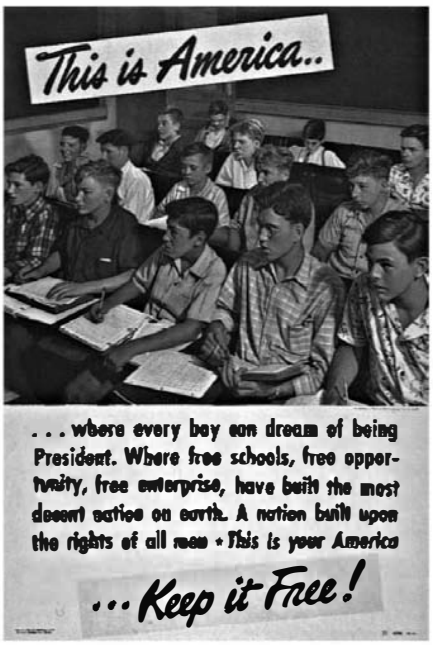
Chapter 6

Gay Anarchy

Sexual Politics in the Crucible of McCarthyism

In the United States, as opposed to Europe, World War II is still remembered as the "good war" for a reason. Compared to the "relatively gentle breezes that reached America's shores," writes Ralph Levering, "the winds of war that pounded Europe and Asia from 1939 to 1945 were like a six-year-long hurricane":

> A sizable portion of the cities on the great Eurasian landmass and its adjoining island states—Britain and Japan—were damaged severely. London was hit repeatedly early in the war by German bombers, and later by German rockets. Rotterdam and other cities in the Netherlands were bombed mercilessly in 1940. Berlin was pummelled by Allied bombers until, as American diplomat Robert Murphy observed, "the odor of death was everywhere"; other German cities, like Dresden and Stuttgart, were fire-bombed until tens of thousands of the residents were charred beyond recognition. To the east, fierce fighting virtually levelled thousands of cities and towns in Eastern Europe, Russia, and China, and a concerted American bombing campaign against Japan in the last years of the war turned large areas of compact Japanese population centres into rubble. Estimates of war related deaths in all the countries involved run as high as 55 million, of whom roughly 20 million were Russians.[1]


This is America..
. . . where every boy can dream of being President. Where free schools, free opportunity, free enterprise, have built the most decent nation on earth. A nation built upon the rights of all men • This is your America
. . . Keep it Free!

The Sheldon-Claire Company, This is America..., *1942. Poster.*

Protected by two oceans, the United States' economy boomed while civilian life (Japanese–Americans exempted) went on as usual. Peace and prosperity on the home front proved a boon to government propaganda, which mobilized the population around the myth that they lived in an equitable, bountiful, democratic paradise bursting with freedoms. As one 1942 poster boasted, "This is America ...where every boy can dream of being President. Where free schools, free opportunity, free enterprise, have built the most decent nation on earth. A nation built upon the rights of all men."[2]

Seemingly, in the minds of the American public, the government could do no wrong. Indeed, on August 8, 1945, two days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, 85 percent of those surveyed favored the action, and 96.5 percent of those polled following the bombing of Nagasaki approved of future bombings, if required.[3] Dwight Macdonald, the anarchist-pacifist editor of the New York journal *Politics* (1944–1949), was one of the few to offer another point-of-view: dropping the bomb proved conclusively that the much vaunted democracies of the United States and Britain were stage-managed affairs run by bureaucrats completely devoid of any humanitarian sentiment. He wrote:

> It seems fitting that the bomb was not developed by any of the totalitarian powers ... but by two democracies (Britain and the United States), the last major powers to continue to pay at least ideological respect to the humanitarian-democratic tradition.

> It also seems fitting that the heads of these governments are both colorless mediocrities. Average men elevated to their positions by the mechanics of the system. All this emphasizes that perfect automatism, that absolute lack of human consciousness or aims which our society is rapidly achieving.... The more commonplace the personalities and senseless the institutions the more grandiose the destruction.[4]

Protests from lone figures like Macdonald, however, could not stem post-war reaction as the United States government rallied its populace for a new "Cold War" against its former ally, the Soviet Union. "Beginning in the late 1940s and continuing until the mid-1960s" the bellicose pro-America, pro-capitalist, anti-radical consensus encompassed "political parties, labor unions, and business groups, mass circulation magazines and daily newspapers, ethical and religious groups, veterans and professional organizations, and liberal and conservative interest groups."[5] These were tough times to be an anarchist.

The American public's hostility towards radicalism was compounded by the sorry state of anarchism in the United States. Before World War II, the movement was already much diminished, thanks to government persecution during World War I and the mass appeal of the American Communist Party in the 1920s and '30s. The cataclysmic defeat of Spain's anarchist-syndicalist movement during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) was another bitter blow, and World War II brought further calamity: the Jewish-American wing of the movement supported the allied war effort in the name of fighting fascism while Italian- and Spanish-American anarchists denounced both sides as imperialists. By 1945, "the divisions caused by the war," writes Paul Avrich, "left the anarchists in a shambles, and what had once been a flourishing movement shrank to the proportions of a sect."[6]

Responding to these circumstances in the winter of 1945, Holly Cantine, co-editor with Dachine Rainer of the journal *The Retort* (1942–1951), called for a return to anarchism's communal roots.[7] *The Retort* was published from Cantine's house near Woodstock,

Holley Cantine and Dachine Rainer, Woodstock, NY, ca 1946–1950. Photograph.

New York, an arts-and-crafts socialist-anarchist community of artists and intellectuals founded in the 1900s.[8] Cantine had grown up in Woodstock and, after a brief stint of graduate studies at Columbia University, returned to build a house not far from the village. Rainer met Cantine at the offices of *Politics* around 1945 and joined him at his home on Mount Tobias, not far from Woodstock, after a brief courtship.[9] There, they lived self-sufficiently and worked to establish a community of the like-minded.[10]

In his editorial on strategies for building an American anarchist movement in the post-war era, Cantine proposed that activists abandon party politics and union-based organizing in favor of decentralized, non-hierarchical cooperative initiatives along the lines of his own efforts.[11] In this way, the radical could serve as "the precursor of a new society, an individual who has broken with the values of the status quo, and has created for himself a new way of life based on a more equitable set of values."[12] Cantine underlined that he was not proposing a retreat from the world. On the contrary, the spread of anarchism by example, he predicted, would inspire workers to walk away from "ex-

Robert Duncan, ca 1944. Photograph.

isting institutions, and cause them to collapse."[13]

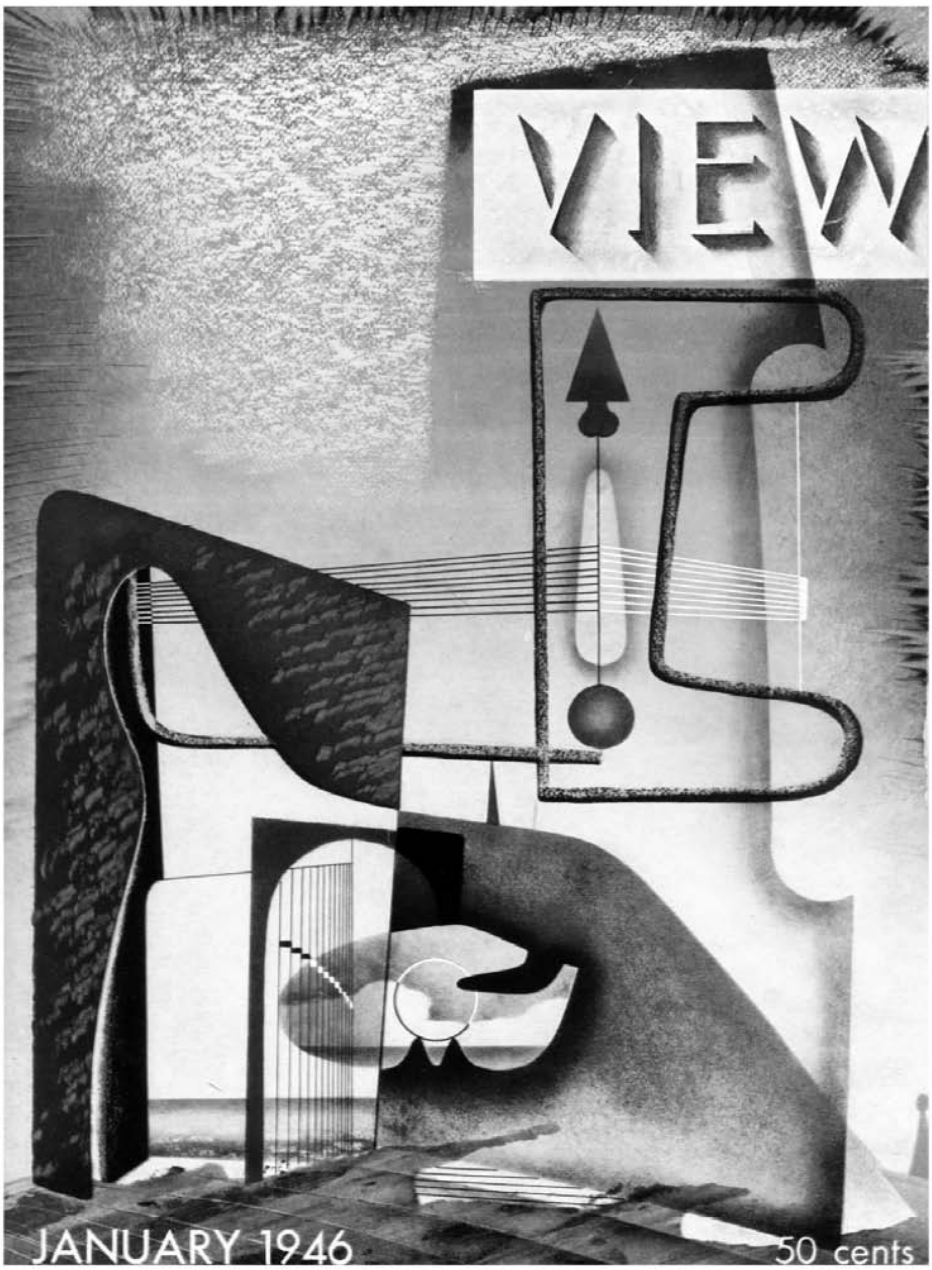
At least, that was his hope. In any event, immediately after the war his program found an echo in San Francisco, where former Woodstock resident and anarchist poet Robert Duncan helped found a weekly discussion group called the Libertarian Circle. The Circle began in early 1946, when Duncan and Philip Lamantia proposed founding an "open and above-board" anarchist discussion group to fellow anarchist Kenneth Rexroth. Rexroth had been living in San Francisco since 1927 and was well-known in the arts community for his poetry and literary criticism; with his backing, the project prospered.[14] From humble beginnings in Rexroth's living room, the Libertarian Circle moved to the top floor of a building occupied by the Jewish anarchist group Arbeiter Ring, where they met weekly to discuss topics such as anarchism and literary mysticism, Emma Goldman, the Kronstadt revolt, and sexual anarchy (the latter necessitating two simultaneous discussions, "one upstairs, the overflow in the downstairs meeting hall").[15] The group also rented a hall for monthly dances and augmented their activities with a weekly Poetry Forum. Every other Wednesday, one writer's work was read, followed by a discussion led by the poet himself; alternative Wednesdays were reserved for seminars in poetry and criticism led by Rexroth.[16] In addition, the Libertarian Circle published a one-issue journal, *Ark*, in 1947, which featured reproductions of paintings, prose essays and poetry, statements on anarchism by George Woodcock and Amon Hennacy, and an article by Duncan on the sexual politics of art entitled "Reviewing *View*, An Attack" that took aim at America's premier surrealist journal, *View*, launched in September 1940 by Charles Henry Ford.

Ford was a poet and surrealist enthusiast of independent means

who, like Duncan, was "out" among his friends as homosexual.[17] He ran the quarterly as an unabashedly commercial enterprise from a New York penthouse office located above a chic nightclub not far from the Museum of Modern Art. Each issue was linked to exhibitions in the city's high-end galleries, which helped to finance the magazine through advertising (alongside pitches for perfumes and lotions).[18] Articles on surrealist theorists such as George Bataille jostled with advertisements for publications by André Breton; reproductions of artwork by Leonor Fini, René Magritte, and the sado-surrealist Hans Bellmer ("creator of a moveable woman whose body, taken apart and re-composed against the laws of nature ... revealed an acute sense of the marvellous allied to a profound nostalgia for childhood and periods dominated by femininity mixed with spurts of violent eroticism"); *View* art postcards for sale; (illustrated) essays on topics such as "The American Macabre," "Shrinking the Heads," and "Geatano Zumbo and Death"; and, last but not least, a repeat full-page advertisement for Helena Rubinstein Galleries (New York–Paris–London), founded by the cosmetics industrialist, announcing "*art* knows no frontiers, *beauty* knows no limitations."[19]

The magazine was incorporated as a business (*View Inc.*) and its office doubled as a bookstore and commercial gallery; it also sponsored jazz concerts and occasional select exhibitions. (Ford wrote about the "brilliant and chic" crowd attending these events.) But *View*'s reign as the "*world's leading journal of avant-garde art and literature*" came to an unexpected halt in the summer of 1947, when its editor abruptly closed shop and departed for Europe.[20]

In the 1940s, Duncan knew Ford, having encountered him after moving to the New York area in 1939 to pursue a love affair begun during his undergraduate studies at Berkeley.[21] The affair ended in 1940 and Duncan, at loose ends, relocated to Woodstock, where for a time he shared a house with James and Blanche Cooney, editors of *The Phoenix* (1938–1940). Ideologically, the Cooneys stood for:



View *cover, Series V, No. 6. January 1946; cover image by John Tunnard.*

> ... the unequivocal condemnation of Industrial forms of society, whether they be of Capitalist (with all its varying shades of Democratic, Liberal, Conservative, Technocratic, etc.), Marxian Communist, Fascist or Nazi variety [and] the unswerving determination to serve under none of these degrading, deathly states, but to break away in small communities, in small precursors of a resurrection and renascence of mankind through a return to the dignity and purity and religiousness of a mode of life rooted in agriculture and the handicrafts.[22]

The Cooneys likened these communities of refuge to "Arks," and this is probably what Duncan and his collaborators had in mind when they named their post-war publication: a contrarian resistance to Cold War society.[23] *Ark*'s opening editorial stated:

> In direct opposition to the debasement of human values made flauntingly evident by the war, there is rising among writers in America, as elsewhere, a social consciousness which recognizes the integrity of the personality as the most substantial and considerable of values.... Present-day society, which is becoming more and more subject to the state with its many forms of corrupt power and oppression, has become the real enemy of individual liberty. Because mutual aid and trust have been coldly, scientifically destroyed; because love, the well of being, has been methodically parched; because fear and greed have become the prime ethical movers, states and state-controlled societies continue to exist. Only the individual can cut himself free from this public evil. He can sever the forced relations between himself and the state, refuse to vote or go to war, refuse to accept the moral irresponsibility yoked into him. Today, at this catastrophic point in time, the validity if not the future of the anarchist position is more than ever established. It has become a polished mirror in which the falsehoods of political modes stand naked. No honest person, if he has looked into

> this mirror, can morally support a government of any description, whether it be a state-capitalist Soviet Union, a capitalist America, a fascist Spain, or any considered society wherein an idea is woven into a blanket of law and cast over a living people from above. Any inorganic thing made authority over the organic is morally weakening and makes annihilating warfare inevitable.... We believe that social transformation must be the aim of any revolutionary viewpoint, but we recognize the organic, spontaneous revolt of individuals as presupposing such a transformation.[24]

While living with the Cooneys, Duncan commuted down to New York to take part in Manhattan's social circles and meet with other literary radicals, including Dwight Macdonald. He also took new lovers, avoided serving in the war by declaring his homosexuality, spent a summer working as a dishwasher in Provincetown, traipsed about Florida, and gained a reputation as the poet of note who, in 1944, had signed his name to an article in *Politics* on "The Homosexual in Society."[25] This was an anarchist assertion of sexual libertarianism and a critique of the pervasive "homosexual cult" amongst gays.[26] Notions of difference that encouraged "snobbery and removal from the 'common sort,'" argued Duncan, merely encouraged gays to add their voices to a range of oppressions—including heterosexism—across the existing social landscape.[27] The truly liberating "starting point" for "creative life and expression," countered Duncan, was:

> ... a devotion to human freedom, toward the liberation of human love, human conflicts, human aspirations. To do this one must disown all the special groups (nations, religions, sexes, races) that would claim allegiance. To hold this devotion every written word, every spoken word, every action, every purpose must be examined and considered. It must always be remembered that others, those who have surrendered their humanity, are not less than oneself. It must be always remembered that

> one's own honesty, one's battle against the inhumanity of one's own group (be it against patriotism, against bigotry, against, in this specific case, the homosexual cult) is a battle that cannot be won in the immediate scene. The forces of inhumanity are overwhelming, but only one's continued opposition can make any other order possible, will give an added strength for all those who desire freedom and equality to break at last those fetters that seem now so unbreakable.[28]

Duncan's attack on *View* in 1947 was premised on this stance. He began by accusing Ford of marketing art as an "experience" spiced with "Freudian menace" for "wealthy dilettantes" who reveled in "the sheer expensively bought spectacle of it,"[29] an approach to art that Duncan characterized as "aesthetic."[30] By way of example, he pointed to *View*'s publication of an anti-war story, "The Buzzard," which described the hungering desires of a bird hovering over a battlefield; the story was sandwiched between Bataille-style "documents"—illustrated by photos of physically deformed people—reporting on human cruelties and abnormalities in Central America. Thus, "The Buzzard's" politics were aestheticized and subsumed within a nightmarish mix of facts, imagery, and fiction. "In the world of *View*," Duncan observed, "horror becomes an end in itself—not a rejection, but an acceptance, more than that, a tremulous embrace of what was horrible, a sensation which may be tasted by the reader for the vicarious thrill of it."[31] Sadly, however, surrealism for consumers was doing very well on the magazine rack: "like The Buzzard, it [*View*] draws its profit and substance from the battlefields, the misery and deformity of modern society; and in contemporary America, where the populace at large relishes the charnel havoc wrought upon the cities of Europe and Japan, *View*'s circulation booms."[32]

In sum, the magazine's success was symptomatic of a larger social sickness, but it was also symptomatic of Ford's internalization of the lies American society imposed on him. Accepting the belief in a singular "normal human being" propagated by an establishment so

"Two Documents," page spread from View, *May 1945.*

"hostile to individuation" that it "describes and debases any individual in terms of his deviation," Ford had embraced the identity of the deviant homosexual "freak" and was now "suing for little more than that the world allow him his 'freakishness.'"[33] Tragically, this led him to prop up the very status quo he should oppose: "He turned to write for, and to live in the milieu that might accept him and that at the same time had the power to provide a protection of a kind; he moved from the outcast legions of low Bohemia to high Bohemia on the margins of that ever curious and hungry section of society, the money-aristocracy."[34] In this regard, Ford was following the example of Breton and the surrealists in exile who, upon arriving in New York in the early 1940s, had been "taken up and taken in by the culture collectors." "All the drama of the real political world" was then "played in charade to give excitement to the boredom of the rentiers" as Breton and company "capitalized upon their revolutionary personalities."[35] Ford helped sell surrealism to this clientele, and Breton valued him for it.[36]

To its credit, *View* during these years was also "unremittingly hostile toward the State and its war." To this extent, it was "anarchistic—against the State."[37] However, Ford's perpetual chewing on "the cud of fin-de-siècle diabolism" suggested he was "hostile not only to the State, but to the individual" as well.[38] "The real menace in the shadow of which we all live—the twentieth-century State or what is so aptly called the Permanent War Economy," reasoned Duncan, was out to crush authentic individuality.[39] *View* raised no resistance to this, because "if to be an individual means individual responsibility,

"A Paris
sous la botte
des Nazis"

PAR JEAN EPARVIER

AUX EDITIONS

RAYMOND SCHALL A PARIS

TOP ROW:
Champagne, nude Rids, . . . They are delighted with the shallowest aspect of Parisian life, in an establishment given over to their diversion. The odious shaved necks, fat and brawny, crowd together. Photos Schall.)

MIDDLE ROW:
. . . and afterward. (Photo Francis Lee).

BOTTOM:
The FFI. troops crawling between the chimneys lead the chase. Little by little the shots become rarer. Paris finally liberated, long after the Liberation, quits her aspect of battle and puts on again her uniform of war. But "her" war. (Photo Berson).

"A Paris..." page from View, *Vol. VI, Nos. 2–3, March–April 1946.*

View with its allegiance to the rentier-aristocracy is hostile to individualism."[40] Rather than caving in to this social strata's "lust for a thrill" in light of its supposed "superiority to the morés of the modern State," Duncan called on Ford to cultivate the "potential awakening to productive and creative life" that anarchism sought.[41] "Experience" should be "something the artist struggles to transform into a field for achieving his or her desires."[42] Ford had lost sight of this, and with it, art's insurrectionary dimension.

Contrast Ford's actions with Duncan's. The Libertarian Circle and *Ark* were communal endeavors free of capitalization whose purpose was to enliven the creative lives of the participants at the same time as they radicalized them. As such, they represented a step towards the exemplary "new way of life based on a more equitable set of values" that Cantine had called for in *Retort*. Both projects were destined to wind down in 1948, but this did not deter Duncan. In 1949, he helped start a third initiative, the Poetry Conference, where writers and artists gathered once a week for readings and discussions. Here, Duncan met and fell in love with a young painter, Jess Collins; the two formed an enduring relationship that lasted until Duncan's death in 1988.[43]

Born in California, Collins had been drafted into the atomic bomb "Manhattan Project" while studying chemistry at the California Institute of Technology. He was sent to the project's Oakridge, Tennessee facilities to work on enriching uranium, and on his twenty-second birthday—August 6, 1945—the United States dropped the fruits of his labor on Hiroshima. Upon release from the military, Collins returned to the California Institute and completed a Bachelor of Science degree in radiochemistry. He rejoined the nuclear war industry in 1948 as a technician, producing plutonium at the Hanford, Washington Atomic Energy Project, but in 1949 he abruptly quit and moved to San Francisco to study art. In a 1992 interview, Collins said that the decision was inspired by "a very strong and convincing dream that the world was going to completely destruct by the year 1975." "I'm sure," he continued, "the kind of work I was doing had some effect on my state of mind at the time."[44]

He later commemorated this vision during the Cuban missile standoff of October 1962, when the United States and the Soviet Union came within hours of starting a nuclear war. His painting *If All the World Were Paper and All the Water Sink* (1962) (see color plate 8), depicts him (or perhaps Duncan) in profile, looking upon a sun-lit glen where children are dancing in a circle. An owl bearing a key swoops down over what at first looks like a bucolic scene until we gaze into the distance, where a mushroom cloud is erupting skyward. For Collins, the circle dance is an act of sun worship symbolic of children's life-energy and their "wondrous ability to infinitely connect images and stories without having to segregate everything."[45] The destructive power of the bomb, on the other hand, is the antithesis of nature's spontaneous, ever conjoining life-force: a weapon of mass destruction deployed for divisive political ends by government bureaucrats.

During his time at Hanford, Collins had begun painting as an "antidote to the science method."[46] "I wanted to do something that was truly meaningful to me," he recalled, and art "was far more meaningful than making plutonium."[47] We get a sense of what the term "meaningful" signifies when he goes on to describe the impact of his training under the anarchist abstract painter Clyfford Still at the California School of Arts, where Jess enrolled as a student in 1949–51. Still's lectures, Collins recalled, were "very moving in terms of my understanding of the passion of the immediate image and the difficulty an artist has in arousing a sense of spirit in a societal structure that tends to suppress it."[48]

Still was an accomplished figural painter who had turned to nonobjectivity in the 1940s. He explained why in 1963 when he dismissed the war and its aftermath as an era of "mechanism, power, and death," concluding "I see no point in adding to its mammoth arrogance the compliment of graphic homage."[49] Still's pessimistic outlook had led him to retreat from social struggle; painting provided him with the one "limited arena" where his "negative dialectic of creative freedom" found resolution beyond the restrictions of the Cold War.[50]

But freedom was tenuous once an artwork left the studio, and in this

regard, Still was particularly hostile toward establishment art critics and the cultural institutions they served. He saw them as operatives in the "authoritarian devices for social control" that dampened the spontaneous reaction of the public to art and the artist's capacity to be innovative. In the post-war years, when his work began attracting attention, he strenuously objected to mainstream art critics "shouting about individualism" in American art while they buried the dissident politics of his work under the weight of formalist aesthetics ("superficial value of material"). "Behind these reactions," he wrote, was "a body of history matured into dogma, authority, tradition. The totalitarian hegemony of this tradition I despise, its presumptions I reject."[51] In an attempt to deal with the situation, Still insisted that his work was not to be shown to or discussed by anybody who lacked insight into the aesthetic and moral values his paintings embodied. In particular, he refused access to James Thrall Sobey (art critic), Clement Greenberg (art critic), and Alfred Barr (director of the Museum of Modern Art): all important players in the cultural marketing of non-objective painting as a symbol of American freedom during the Cold War.[52]

At the California School of the Arts, Still urged his students to adopt the same strategy, but apart from that they were free to follow their own path.[53] According to Collins, though personally committed to abstraction, Still "never dictated an aesthetic" and encouraged his students to reject any preconceptions regarding what was "good, right or proper" in painting.[54] Consequently, when Collins began noticing imaginative "scenes or fantasies" in his own non-objective paintings, he welcomed them as features worth exploring.[55] Around 1951, just after moving in with Duncan, this led him to adopt collage "as a way ... to construct imaginary scenarios in a more realistic rather than a non-objective way."[56] His first large-scale collage "paste up," *The Mouse's Tale* (1951) (see color plate 9), was also a personal statement. Collins conceived of this work as a self-conscious reclaiming of the male body—the homosexual object of desire—from the domination of heterosexual macho presentations. As he put it, he was "showing innocent beauty," albeit with a decidedly gay sensibility.[57]

The gesture might not seem radical until put in context. Collins created his collage at a time when being gay was something associated with the criminal underworld, leftism, scandal, and mental illness. People lost their jobs and went to jail for it.[58] Responding to this state of affairs, *The Mouse's Tale* doesn't agitate, polemicise, protest, or proclaim a position; rather, by celebrating male beauty, Collins followed Duncan's dictum in "The Homosexual in Society," to configure his own creativity as a starting point for "devotion to human freedom, toward the liberation of human love, human conflicts, human aspirations."[59] This is the sense in which *The Mouse's Tale* was radical—Collins' personal breakthrough into sexually-charged imagery and his refusal to participate in the American war machine unfolded along the same political continuum.

And there were further developments. In 1952, Collins and Duncan teamed up with the artist Harry Jacobus to found an independent artist-run gallery which they named after French satirist Alfred Jarry's (see Chapter Three) theatrical parody of a stupid, bumbling European bourgeois imperialist, "King Ubu."[60] The agenda of King Ubu was resolutely non-commercial and experimental—to avoid any monetary schemes arising from the venture, all three founders agreed to run it for one year (December 1952–December 1953), and then close it down.[61] One could say that Collins, Duncan, and Jacobus were realizing the anti-capitalist ethos propagated by Still by creating a non-commercial exhibition space where artists were subject only to the judgement of their peers or those who expressed enough interest to search out the gallery, which was located in a run-down section of the city. Over the course of its existence, the King Ubu hosted fifteen exhibitions, two plays staged by Duncan, regular Sunday literary meetings involving readings by former Libertarian Circle participants (Rexroth, Lamantia, and others), two experimental film screenings, and musical performances.[62]

Apart from the King Ubu experiment and a host of similar projects that followed, the domestic sphere was also important. Here, through the 1950s and 1960s, Collins and Duncan hosted artistic events and

circulated privately-produced publications free from the gaze of censors and critics.[63] In effect, Collins and Duncan transformed their home into an community-building sphere for self-expression and exchange between friends and acquaintances, which deepened mutual understanding while enriching lives on a profound level. Collins and Duncan enacted anarchism on an intimate scale, and their post-war art and activism were of a piece with this ethos: creating authentically, they inspired others to do the same.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1 Ralph B. Levering, *The Cold War: 1945–1987* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1988): 14.

2 I am quoting the text of a World War II poster, "This is America ... Keep it Free!" (1942) in William L. Bird, Jr. and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Designing for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998): 85.

3 James Tracy, *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 51; Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 106.

4 Dwight Macdonald, "The Bomb," (September 1945) in *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958): 177.

5 Levering, 56.

6 Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 417.

7 Holley Cantine, Jr., "Editorials," *Retort* 2 (Winter 1945): 2–9

8 Dachine Rainer, "Holley Cantine: February 14, 1916–January 2, 1977," *Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy*, Max Bleckman, ed. (New York and Seattle: Autonomedia and Left Bank Books, 1994): 178.

9 Cantine's first companion, Dorothy Paul, served as co-editor of *The Retort* from its founding in 1942 through to 1945. After Cantine began his relationship with Rainer, Paul departed and Rainer took on co-editorship. See ibid., 182.

10 Ibid., 184.

11 Cantine, Jr., "Editorials," 7.

12 Ibid., 3.

13 Ibid., 4.

14 On Rexroth's life, see Ken Kabb, *The Relevance of Rexroth* (Berkeley; Bureau of Public Secrets, 1990): 49–55, and Kenneth Rexroth, "Interviews," *The San Francisco Beat Poets*, David Meltzer, ed. (New York: Ballantine, 1971): 13. On the founding of the Libertarian Circle, see Ekbert Faas, *Young Robert Duncan: Portrait of the Poet as Homosexual in Society* (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1983): 192.

15 Rexroth quoted in ibid.

16 Ibid., 193

17 Dikran Tashjian, *A Boat Load of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde, 1920-1950* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995): 157–160.

18 Ibid., 199–200. See, for example, the back cover of *View* 5 (May 1945).

19 See *View*, vols. 6–7 (February 1946–March 1947).

20 Ford quoted in Tashjian, 200–201.

21 Faas, 72.

22 James Peter Cooney, "Editorial," *The Phoenix* 2 (Spring 1939): 120.

23 Ibid., 123.

24 "Editorial," *Ark* (1947) quoted in Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy J. Peters, *Literary San Francisco: A Pictorial History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1980): 155–156.

25 Faas, 123.
26 Ibid., 61–145.
27 Robert Duncan, "The Homosexual in Society," *Politics* 1 (August 1944): 209–111.
28 Ibid., 111.
29 Robert Duncan, "Reviewing View, An Attack," *The Ark* 1 (1947): 63.
30 Ibid., 63–64.
31 Ibid., 64. French surrealist George Bataille's journal, *Documents* (1929–1932), published many photo features of slaughterhouse scenes, killings, human deformities, etc., alongside celebratory articles on topics such as sadism, torture, rape, cannibalism, murder, and human sacrifice, usually visited upon helpless women or children. Such preoccupations are indicative of the movement. See Briony Fer, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993): 200–209 and Rudolf Kuenzli, "Surrealism and Misogyny," *Surrealism and Women*, Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991): 17–26.
32 Duncan, "Reviewing *View*," 64.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 65.
35 Ibid., 66.
36 See Tashjian, 188–198.
37 Duncan, "Reviewing *View*," 67.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 65.
40 Ibid., 67.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 63.
43 Patrick Frank, "San Francisco, 1952: Painters, Poets, Anarchism," *Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy*, 146.
44 Michael Auping, "An Interview with Jess," *Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951–1993* (Buffalo: Albert-Knox Art Gallery, 1993): 19.
45 Collins quoted in Michael Auping, "Jess: A Grand Collage," *Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951–1993*, 46.
46 See "Chronology," *Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951–1993*, 234. Collins is cited in Frank, 146.
47 Auping, "An Interview with Jess," 19.
48 Ibid., 20.
49 Clyfford Still, "Statement (1952)" and "Statement (1963)," quoted in David Craven, *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique: Dissent During the McCarthy Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 166.
50 David Anfam, "Clyfford Still's Art: Between the Quick and the Dead," *Clyfford Still: Paintings 1944–1960*, James T. Demetrion, ed. (Washington: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2001): 36.
51 Clyfford Still, "Statement (1959)," *Theories of Modern Art*, ed. Herschel. B. Chipp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969): 574–575.
52 Clyfford Still to Betty Parsons, March 20, 1948, quoted in Serge Guilbaut, *How*

New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War, Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983): 201. On the critical appropriation of abstract painting by Still and others to the cause of the Cold War, see ibid., 166–194.

53 Richard Candida Smith, *Utopia and Dissent: Art, Poetry, and Politics in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 102.

54 Auping, "An Interview with Jess," 20.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 25.

58 Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999): 329–352.

59 Ibid., 111.

60 Seymour Howard, "King Ubu: Gallery in a Theater," *The Beat Generation Galleries and Beyond*, John Hatsoulas, ed. (Davis, CA: John Natsoulas Press, 1996): 23. On Jarry's "Ubu" character, see Patricia Leighten, "The White Peril and L'Art nègre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism," *Art Bulletin* 72 (December, 1990): 621–622.

61 Howard, 23.

62 Ibid., 26–27.

63 According to Robert J. Bertholf, domestic households became a locus of activity in San Francisco during the 1950s, thanks in partto the example of Collins and Duncan. Among other projects, Collins and Duncan held poetry readings and performances in their home. See Robert J. Bertholf, "The Concert: Robert Duncan Writing Out of Painting," *Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951–1993*, 75–76. They also participated in a co-operative publication, *The Artist's View* (1951–1954), which circulated privately amongst the participants. Each issue was produced by an individual in the group. See Smith, 236.

Chapter 7

Breakout from the Prison House of Modernism

An Interview with Susan Simensky Bietila

The 1960s are rightly viewed as a time of renewal in the history of twentieth-century anarchism, when mass uprisings in places as far flung as the United States, France, Czechoslovakia, and Mexico challenged the status quo in explicitly anti-authoritarian terms. In America, the civil rights movement merged with the anti-Vietnam War movement, giving rise to a richly diverse counterculture with strong anarchist currents that carried over into the 1970s. Marxist turned anarchist Murray Bookchin nicely encapsulated the gulf between the old left and the emergent counterculture. Recalling Marxist-dominated politics prior to the 1960s, he wrote:

> 'Life-style?'—the word was simply unknown. If we were asked by some crazy anarchists how we could hope to change society without changing ourselves, our relations with each other, and our organizational structure, we had one ritualistic answer: ' ... after the revolution.' 'After the revolution....'—this was our magic talisman. It expressed our incredibly naïve belief that merely by 'abolishing' the economic relationships and institutions of capitalism we would thereby abolish the bourgeois family, the bourgeois state, and bourgeois attitudes towards sexuality, women, children, indeed toward people and life as a whole. (The gross deception here—a deception which lies at

> the very core of Marxism—is that changes in the pre-conditions of society and life are equivalent to changes in the conditions of society and life, a fallacy which blatantly mistakes the sufficient reason for the necessary reason.) And this 'beautiful revolution' would be realized by using bourgeois methods of organization and involved bourgeois relations between people. We totally failed to recognize that our methods and relations were subverting our goals, indeed our very personalities as revolutionaries.[1]

Contemporary "Youth Culture," on the other hand, was rife with potential: "In its demands for tribalism, free sexuality, community, mutual aid, ecstatic experience, and a balanced ecology," wrote Bookchin, it prefigured, "however inchoately, a joyous communist and classless society, freed from the trammels of hierarchy and domination, a society that would transcend the historic splits between town and country, individual and society, and mind and body."[2]

The 1960s did indeed mark a sea change, at least in terms of who was articulating what radicalism was. For example, this was the era when Noam Chomsky began speaking out against the foreign policies of the United States government from an anarchist viewpoint. While Chomsky critiqued American politics, Bookchin popularized anarchism's ecological dimension. At the time, anarchist-feminism was renewed in part thanks to the tireless efforts of Alex Kates Shulman and Richard Drinnon to promote the life and writings of Emma Goldman. In the previous chapters, I discussed gay poet Robert Duncan and his role in the American poetry scene; a second voice championing libertarian sexuality was social theorist Paul Goodman, author of the best-seller *Growing Up Absurd* (1960). In addition, poets Diane di Prima, Gary Snyder, and others promoted connections between anarchism, poetics, and spirituality while John Cage explored its musical ramifications. Finally, the Living Theatre collective developed and popularized their distinctive variation of anarchist-pacifism in the United States and Europe.

I have long been interested in what role anarchist visual artists played during these years. I was fortunate, then, to make the acquaintance of one of anarchism's better-known contemporary artists, Susan Simensky Bietila. During the 1960s, she worked as an illustrator for the activist press in New York while completing an undergraduate degree in art under the tutelage of prominent abstractionist painters. In the following interview, conducted by email, she sheds considerable light on the ways in which the mainstream art world of the 1960s maintained a separation of art and politics at the same time as the American counterculture was failing to realize its anarchic potential.

What was it like growing up in New York?

I was born in 1947 and grew up working-class in Brooklyn. The community was largely Eastern European Jewish, and my family lived in a Federal Housing Project apartment. When I was a kid, I was recruited out of kindergarten on an art scholarship to the Brooklyn Museum School; by the time I was six, I was traveling on the subway by myself to Saturday art classes. I went to the High School of Music & Art and had studio classes as well as art history. There I met bohemian teens from Greenwich Village and heard about the existence of the anti-nuclear bomb group, Student Peace Union.[3]

My political activism began in the summer of 1964 when I worked at Camp Twin Link, run by covert Communist Party USA members. This same camp also ran a neighborhood after-school program I had attended as a child. It was linked to the Atlanta School of Social Work, which was a hotbed of civil rights activism and connected with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.[4] Other counselors were civil rights activists and college students who were in the Students for a Democratic Society [SDS].[5] Many of them had been sent to this or other political summer camps as children by their leftist parents. At the camp, I was caring for five-year-old boys and less than delighted with this sort of work, being too poor to have been sent to summer camp myself, and feeling as if there was some hypocrisy

at essentially being a nanny for radicals. I found out about the war in Vietnam and the United States' role in it from Paul Millman, another counselor at the camp who was in SDS at Antioch College. He scolded me for not reading the news and following world affairs, and I took this advice to heart. There was also an adjoining teen work camp—all black teens from projects near the one where I lived. They were there on scholarship, to be reformed out of their "gang-loving ways." They got to be kids, but I had to work. While there, I gained class awareness and developed a suspicion of traditional "left" politics.

In the fall of 1964, I went to Brooklyn College, City University of New York [CUNY], as part of the Scholars Program for students gifted in mathematics and the hard sciences, but soon became an art major.

New York was an intense place to be, politically speaking, during this time. What organizations were you involved in at CUNY?

The first group I was involved in was Brooklyn College's equivalent of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement—the Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Freedom, which included faculty as well as students.[6] As at Berkeley, students who had braved confrontations during the civil rights voter registration drives in the south returned to school to find their own political expression severely restricted. The hypocrisy of this being the "norm" at a prestigious institution of higher learning fueled the creation of a powerful movement on campus.

Then SDS. I can't recall exactly when in 1965 the SDS chapter at Brooklyn College was formed. There were older students at Brooklyn College who had been politically active for several years and were in contact with the students who started SDS. There were also "travelers" who visited college campuses and helped organize. I was active in SDS from the time that there were a few hundred members nationally until tens of thousands were involved, and my political understanding grew exponentially. My thinking developed with the organization to

the point where we named the United States government "imperialist" and called for defeat in Vietnam.

I was elected chapter "president"—or was volunteered, as the position was meaningless within the consensus dynamics of the group, but helpful for functioning on campus. All student groups had to be registered and approved by the student council and the administration required a "President—Vice President—Secretary—Treasurer" structure. Only officers could reserve rooms, and submit posters to be approved for display, etc. I was probably elected because I was safe in my standing as a student, since I was in the Scholar's Program and getting high grades. It was good theater to have the official spokesperson of the most radical group on campus be a fairly inarticulate seventeen-year-old girl who looked even younger than her age. It poked fun at the Administration's "Red Menace" fear-mongering stereotypes. Whatever the reasons for my selection, the trust the other student activists had in me bolstered my self-confidence.

The college president, Harry Gideonse, was at the time the head of Freedom House, a "liberal" anti-Communist think tank/academic wing of the government's drive to stamp out domestic radicalism following World War II.[7] He had instituted bureaucracies to stifle freedom of political expression after conducting a more blatant reign of terror in the 1950s, when faculty were required to sign anti-Communist "loyalty oaths" and were subjected to political inquisitions. Many were fired for having unacceptable political ideas. Lots of students had been expelled as well. In 1950, Gideonse dissolved the student government and closed the college newspaper, *The Vanguard*, using bogus excuses, but really because they were bases of opposition to his agenda. During the early 1960s, students were expelled for participating in an anti-nukes protest. I heard about it later in the 1960s from Jerry Badanes, who was active in Movement for a Democratic Society [MDS], the non-student wing of SDS. If my recall is correct, he was one of the students expelled. During an air raid drill, when students were supposed to go to basement areas marked as nuclear shelters, a number of students reclined on the steps of Boylan Hall,

the main building, each holding a sun reflector, the kind used at the beach to get a speedy tan, as if from the flash of light that preceded the mushroom cloud. This was an act of civil disobedience, but more impressively, it was my first exposure to *détournement*.[8]

When I started college, every leaflet and poster had to be approved by the Dean of Student Activities, Archie McGregor, or it would be torn down by employees from the Office of Student Activities. All invited "outside" speakers had to be approved—all films or presentations as well. Prohibitions against walking on the grass and a dress code for female students were rigorously enforced. There was a security guard in front of the library whose job was to turn away women wearing pants. It was quite the model police state. Inspired by the Free Speech Movement, some older students who had been involved in the civil rights movement and some faculty, particularly from the departments of sociology and philosophy, Professor Richard Mendes, and Dr. Sitton, came together to organize for academic freedom. I was on the steering committee of this group and a meeting was held at my house. Mother was awed; she served coffee and pastries. The student council got involved, as did the Young Democrats [youth recruitment wing of the Democratic Party]—both the student government and faculty council, and they overturned the censorship powers of the administration. Harry Gideonse decided that it was the opportune time to retire. This cleared the way for more freedom to agitate against the Vietnam War and the military draft, issues that had immediate impact on every male student.

The SDS chapter grew steadily and included students with various political leanings. It remained somewhat counter-cultural, overlapping with the bohemian, folk-singing, pot-smoking sector of the student community. Trotskyists and the Communist Party USA had their own student groups, which attracted few if any new students.[9] The Progressive Labor Party [PLP], however, was active within our SDS chapter and caused distrust against us within the national organization, although anyone who took the trouble to get to know us realized quickly that, despite being very visible, the PLP didn't domi-

nate the chapter.[10] The head of student organizing for the PLP, Jeff Gordon, was in the Brooklyn College Chapter of SDS and was one of the people subpoenaed to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee [HUAC], along with future Yippie Jerry Rubin, in 1966.[11] Rubin was there because he had been one of the organizers of the Vietnam Day Committee which protested against the war in Berkeley. I went to Washington to demonstrate against HUAC shortly after the Brooklyn College SDS chapter was formed.

I was the representative of the Brooklyn College chapter to the New York Regional Council and to the National Council of SDS, which was as important for my political development as the grassroots organizing at Brooklyn College. It got me out of New York for the first time in my life; I met people from all over America, many from different backgrounds and cultures.

Although I was nowhere close to being a regional or national leader, I met other people like me, made interesting friends, and had opportunities I never would have otherwise had. Terry Davis, the chapter representative from the Borough of Manhattan Community College, who also grew up in a housing project, was my age and more worldly. She taught me to dance, and took me and Bobby Quidone, who was gay, to the Newport Folk Festival to talk to artists about doing a benefit for SDS. We got invited to all-night parties and road trips with affluent Argentine-Jewish Brecht Theatre aficionados, one of whom dated a playwright friend of SDS organizer Sarah Murphy. Sarah later married one of the student leaders of the 1968 uprising in Mexico City.[12] I first heard of the situationists from them, I believe.[13]

So you were getting a real political education from the time you entered university. What impact did this have on your art and did politics seep into your art classes?

Though I was an activist, I didn't do college work with political content. A number of artists from the New York abstractionist school taught at Brooklyn College. The art faculty whom I remember were

Ad Reinhardt, Carl Holty, Philip Pearlstein, and Jimmy Ernst, son of the surrealist Max Ernst. David Sawin taught Art History along with Morris Dorsky. The department chairman was the well-known art historian, Milton W. Brown. Walter Rosenblum taught photography and was fine politically.

You photographed some early anti-Vietnam street theater by the Bread and Puppet Theater in 1966 for an assignment in Rosenblum's class (see color plate 10).[14]

Bread and Puppet made beautiful masks and decorated anti-war demonstrations with elegant pageantry. Their tone was mournful, grieving. I loved the technique, but was feeling anger at having been taken in by the myth of American democracy and was searching for a means of expression with more satirical bite.

I am intrigued by the fact that you studied with Carl Holty, Ad Reinhardt, and other prominent artists. Reinhardt was among the most vocal regarding the importance of abstraction in his generation, and participated in the founding of the New York-based Writers and Artists Protest organization that formed in 1965. In April and June of that year, they published two anti-Vietnam War advertisements in the *New York Times*—"End Your Silence"—with hundreds of writers' and artists' signatures.[15] Can you tell me more about instruction at Brooklyn College and how the artists approached the issue of art and politics in their capacity as teachers? Did they ever discuss political issues in relation to art? Or did they maintain a strict separation between the two?

There was so much of a separation that there was complete silence—not only political content, but narrative had no place in the critical discussion. I later became aware that many of the art faculty very actively opposed the war in Vietnam and marched in organized artists' contingents at the antiwar demonstrations, but this was never, ever discussed with me. Even though my political activity on campus was

obvious and the art faculty knew when I left town for conferences and demonstrations, I was never invited to join the anti-war art groups. I assumed at the time that art students were not welcome.

None of the Art Department faculty joined the student-faculty antiwar group on campus or, for that matter, participated in the campus free speech movement. There was no discussion of politics in studio classes or in critiques [discussions of student work involving professors and students]. Studio critiques were completely formalist—composition and technique were the issues. Art history classes were barely better; heavy on rote slide identification, with art sealed off from the history of the world, the assumption being that art existed only within an "art world" where it had meaning only in relation to previous works of art. Artists were influenced only by other artists, with each school rebelling against the previous generation—an orderly evolution of styles with the present being the glorious and logical culmination of all high art that came before.

I did not accept these premises and felt that I was being fed McCarthyist dogma.[16] It was not until the 1980s that I began to understand where all this was coming from, but at the time there was no forum for discussing or questioning the dogma. I just looked elsewhere for theoretical constructs that were enlightening and to art from previous historical periods for inspiration.

During the World War II era, the Brooklyn College Art Department had been greatly influenced by the German Bauhaus and was, according to the college's own official history, "blurring the lines between fine and applied art."[17] This had ended before I arrived. Major changes in the curriculum were made in 1956 separating study into classes by discrete mediums—drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, etc.

When I told the Scholars Program that I was going to major in Studio Art, Milton W. Brown, the Art Department Chair, called me in for a meeting and laid out a plan for my education. I was to take a few introductory classes and then tutorials with senior professors selected for me. Ad Reinhardt was later assigned to be my "mentor"—in charge of overseeing my progress.

At Brooklyn College, abstraction was the rage. It was considered somewhat scandalous by the media and got lots of attention, the controversy being about whether it was art or not. It was incomprehensible to the uninitiated—elitist and quite the commodity circus, in my opinion.

It was probably Reinhardt who encouraged me to go to galleries to see what was being shown at the time. I knew that there were parties at show openings. He evidently thought that it would be okay for me to show up at openings, but it didn't seem like something that I would ever do. I imagined feeling awkward, unwelcome, and out of place. It seemed like a career as an abstract painter was basically a sophisticated hustle, playing up to rich patrons, marketing oneself. What I was being encouraged to do as a painter was look at what was selling and then create my own "look"—one extremely similar to what everyone else was doing, but just different enough to not be out and out imitation.... Then, once it "sold," I was to stick with it as an identity—my own franchise. Well, I was busy creating an identity, but it was about being true to myself and resisting pressures to conform to social mores which were phony.

Besides, even sophisticated women seemed to have an impossible time being taken seriously as painters in the abstractionist boys' club. I sensed that it would be a fruitless effort as well as self-destructive. I imagined that getting involved in this world would include sleeping with old guys and putting up with the current expectation of feminine behavior. Reinhardt was probably sincere about encouraging me to start going to upscale 57th Street galleries and meeting people in the art world, but I had a visceral reaction against the whole art-as-commodity marketing thing and thought that such circles would be where these forces would operate with the greatest intensity.

Reinhardt never talked to me about politics. I never knew the extent of his political involvement until long after his death [Ad Reinhardt died in 1967]. I was being taught to develop color-and-form presentations on canvas and when I got a harmonious push-pull balance of form, that was the content. I think that Reinhardt himself believed

in following a particular abstractionist trajectory, which led to a form of spiritual purism in painting. I could see the logic of his ideas, but disagreed with his premises about the history of art and with his ideas about art's social role. I never argued with him about these ideas. I did not have the words or the confidence to articulate my objections until after I had done political artwork for publication.

I felt that my art classes were anachronistic and that my political activism was where the real learning was happening. I wanted the same intellectual excitement in my art-making, but I had no role models. None of the other art students were doing anything with provocative content. I was given a studio all to myself and was isolated from other students in the department.

As time went on, I spent less and less time painting and was quite unproductive. I recall listening to Reinhardt's critiques of my paintings in the spring of 1967 and becoming more aware of composition and color, but being totally frustrated with my work.

I asked questions in art history classes about political content in art and was referred repeatedly to Marxist Arnold Hauser's *Social History of Art*; I found it less than forthcoming regarding real questions about the impact of art and the role of the artist in society.[18]

I talked with Jimmy Ernst [son of German surrealist painter Max Ernst] about doing political art, expecting for some reason that he might be sympathetic, having escaped from the Nazis ... but he was cold as ice. Every professor said the same thing: "Art never changed society." "All political art is propaganda and not good art." "Why would you want to create propaganda?" Some also implied that "propaganda" meant "pro-Communist Party dictatorship."

In an interview with Jeanne Seigel for a series called "Great Artists in America Today," that aired June 13, 1967 on New York's WBAI radio station, Reinhardt said:

> I think an artist should participate in any protests against war as a human being. There's no way they can participate

> as an artist without being almost fraudulent or self-mocking about what they're doing. There are no good images or good ideas that one can make. There are no effective paintings or objects that one can make against the war. There's been a complete exhaustion of images. A broken doll with red paint poured over it or a piece of barbed wire may seem to be a symbol or something like that, but that's not the realm of the fine artist anyway."[19]

I gather that the art education you were getting at Brooklyn College convinced you that "modernism" as codified by Reinhardt and others had no political relevance?

Actually, I was convinced that "modernism" as presented by Reinhardt, Ernst, etc., was very political, reactionary art promoting a McCarthyite attack on the ability of art to be an accessible form of social discourse and making it, in fact, an elitist commodity. Looking at documents from the period, I found an interview with Ad Reinhardt in which his opinions are even more blatant—a radio panel discussion between Reinhardt and artists Leon Golub, Allan D'Arcangelo, and Marc Morrel following the Angry Arts events of early 1967.[20] The discussion was broadcast on August 10, just twenty days before Reinhardt died. In the debate, Reinhardt says:

> I'm not so sure just from a political and social point of view what protest images do and I would raise a question. I suppose this is an advertising or communications problem. In no case in recent decades has the statement of protest art had anything to do with the statement in the fine arts.[21]

> As an artist, you can only reach those people who are willing to meet you more than half way. At least that's the fine artist's problem now. Another kind of artist who has techniques of communication or who wants to affect people like an adver-

> tising artist or a poster artist or somebody who wants to get a strong reaction, that's another matter. You don't know exactly how effective that is.[22]

> Imagination is the word used for an idea man in an advertising agency. You don't have imagination in the fine arts.[23]

In response to a question by Marc Morrel—"How do you look at a painting?"—he replies:

> Only as a painting, of course. I don't see how a painter can look at painting except as a painting. Then you know the artist is involved in certain tricks in colors and forms. But one artist doesn't look at another artist ever as somebody who's had some kind of experience. That's for laymen, the idea that an artist expresses some life experience he's had.[24] If you are saying that an artist's impulse comes from some life experience first it wouldn't be true. An artist comes from some other artist or some art experience first.[25]

> Goya is only important because of his relation to Manet.[26]

Reinhardt called Picasso's anti-war mural *Guernica* [1937] "just a cubist, surrealist painting of some kind. It doesn't tell you anything about the Spanish war [the Spanish Civil War, 1936–39].... Actually, I'm against interpretation anyway, but the most interesting or at least the most relevant interpretation seems to be the psychoanalytic one in which Picasso reveals himself to be an open book."[27]

When Leon Golub stated that the figures in *Guernica* "have a tremendous effectiveness on me even today," Reinhardt responded, "The Spanish war was lost." Golub replied, "Paintings don't change wars. They show feelings about wars." Reinhart responded again, "It didn't explain anything about Spain to anyone."[28]

So, in summary, his position was that: (1) An artist's life experience

does not impact on the artist's work; (2) Imagination has no role in the fine arts; (3) Art is not a means of communication; (4) Art which attempts to communicate is not "fine art," but advertising or poster art; (5) Looking for meaning in a painting is only for ignorant "laymen"; and (6) Art intended as socially critical satire is inevitably co-opted and successfully exploited by those it was made to criticize.

What an angry, thoroughly negative man. Every single thing that he is against, I advocate. Quite extraordinary.

Tell me more about the divorce between art-making and activism at Brooklyn College.

My studio was a cell at the top of a tower, where, working in complete isolation, it felt more and more like a prison. It occurred to me one day that doing abstract paintings was incredibly isolating as well as boring. To me it just seemed absurd, considering all that was going on in the mid-1960s and what was being questioned. Politics, gender, all the power relationships in society were up for grabs at that point and it was a very exciting time. I was sure that there was a way to do artwork which wasn't isolating, where the art went out into the city and you got to actually see people's reactions. I was driven to find a way to do this.

As far as college thwarting my political art goes, the academic structure at Brooklyn—being immersed in the separation of art and politics—was probably more powerful than merely preaching anti-politics dogma. I'm thinking of the way the Art Department was structured: subjects based upon techniques—painting, drawing, printmaking—and then art history divided by periods, with art analyzed mainly within the confines of the art that came before it. There was no structural place for the analysis of art socially: no discussion, no actual interaction between the art student's work and the public.

In 1966, Brooklyn College SDS was active against the draft and against the war.[29] We produced new leaflets every few days and handed them out during class changes. Early on, people would turn away

in disgust. Some crumpled up the leaflets and threw them at us. Some called us Communists with great animosity and others took the leaflet and threw it on the ground or in the trash. But as time went on and more soldiers died, students began to pay more attention. They stayed and argued and were more knowledgeable about the war. They argued the domino theory [the American government asserted that South East Asian countries would "fall like dominos" if the war in Vietnam was lost], but were not really sold on it.

Anticipation of being drafted loomed. Within SDS, there were running discussions about the class nature of the draft, and the perceived "immorality" of the protection being in university gave. As the war required more troops, the government Draft Board instituted an exam in early 1966 to cull the college students with low grades and take away their student exemptions. We picketed out front during the exam and students joined the demo as they exited the test. The exam was so crass. An arbitrary grade would decide who would live and who would die.

Military recruiters were scheduled to set up on campus in the lobby of Boylan Hall. SDS planned a sit-in. I helped plan it, but decided not to go, afraid of the reaction at home if I were arrested. My father had gone ballistic when I was arrested the year before at a party of activist kids invaded by 200 police. Eighty-eight of us spent the night in the "tombs" [notorious basement-level holding cells in downtown Manhattan's police headquarters]. William Kunstler was our lawyer, and all the charges were dropped and records expunged. So I went to English class in the same building as the sit-in. I could hear the chants echoing through the halls and felt so torn.... When class ended, I walked out the door and was grabbed by three burly cops who had been escorted to my class by the Dean of Student Activities, Archie McGregor himself. They lifted me under the arms and shoved me downstairs to the sit-in, where they promptly declared that I was under arrest. I was lifted up by four cops, one holding each limb, and thrown into a waiting paddy wagon. I landed on a pile of my friends. After that wagon was full, they pulled up another and packed the activists

in. We sat waiting for the vans to drive off and nothing happened. We couldn't see what was happening. All the people at the sit-in seemed to have been arrested, but the paddy wagons sat. We heard a buzz of people and felt surges of tumultuous activity outside. Chants of "Cops off campus" rose intermittently. Five hours later, we were finally taken to the police station to be booked (See color plate 11).

Meanwhile, previously uninvolved students and faculty were up in arms. "Cops on campus" was denounced as a disgrace and the faculty demanded that the administration drop the charges against us immediately. My art professors organized a bail fund to get me out and called my parents to tell them that I had done nothing wrong. We spent the night locked up. In the morning, when we were released, we returned to campus to find 5,000 students waiting for us. Students who had never been to a demonstration before organized a student strike and shut down the school. We held a spontaneous rally and heard about the hundreds of students who had sat down around the paddy wagons, blocking their movement, and from one in particular who had chained and padlocked himself to the campus gates, in the process locking his body across the opening. Campus opposition to the war and the draft had reached a new peak.

After the arrest, my parents and grandmother were traumatized for a long time. My mother and grandmother, refugees from anti-Jewish pogroms during the civil war following the Russian revolution, were worried about my safety and my future. There was a student trip to Europe and I really wanted to go, but couldn't imagine being able to afford such a luxury. College was just about free and I had state scholarship money that had been going into the bank. My grandmother lifted up her housedress and pulled a bunch of rolled up bills out of the elastic band of her thigh-high stockings. She berated my mother—"The rich people send their girls to Europe to get polished and become ladies. We can't do anything less for 'Suzele'." My grandmother steadfastly refused to discuss any details of life in Bessarabia and never could imagine why anyone would want to go to the Europe

she had fled, but you had to be "modern" to get ahead. So I had a ticket to Europe and money in my pocket.

First, I flew to London and went to the office of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.[30] There I met Sheila, the office staff person. She invited me out with two of her friends, one a Londoner and the other a black South African graduate student who was in exile. Sheila introduced me to the famous English peace activist, Peggy Duff, who invited me to go to Stockholm with her and Bertrand Russell to attend the War Crimes Tribunal.[31]

I decided not to go for a number of reasons. I wanted to meet radicals my own age and did not want to spend my first time away from home in a passive situation listening to other people speak, even if they were world-class thinkers. I went out to a club to hear a rock group, The Social Deviants, and met people who were squatting at a London School of Economics dorm. They turned out to be junkies, so I decided that I would travel on and try my luck in Amsterdam.

When I went to Europe, I was looking for friends and lovers. In Amsterdam, I found the anarchists after being there for two days. An art student was selling the Provo publication, *Die Witte Krant* [*The White Paper*], and I volunteered to do artwork for it.[32] I never did more than hand-letter an ad, but the group immediately took me in and introduced me around to their friends. A few of the people I spent large amounts of time with had been central to the political actions of Provo. Many others were in close proximity to the main instigators. The scene was much more like the traveling punk kids of today, but it is important to note that I was there when school was not in session and many activists traveled.

In Holland, art students were much more experimental. Art was much more integrated into daily life: be-ins, where people dressed up in costume, chalk drawing on the sidewalk, installation art, poetry readings on the streets.[33] The same people who were radical political theorists were participating in public art. Now, a lot of the actual art was more countercultural than about the war and imperialism. The Dutch were involved in their last colonial war in New Guinea and

AWOL soldiers were being protected in our midst. There was a lot of humor as well as sex-and-drugs-related content: much more "hippie" than "angry anti-war," but certainly presenting other possibilities for how art could operate in a community.

Would it be fair to say you became more anarchistic during your time with Provo?

I think the answer is the opposite. I already had anarchist ideas and was seeking out people who were politically and culturally compatible. Politically and artistically, I was already inspired by the *détournement*-style tactics of Jerry Rubin in a revolutionary War of Independence outfit at the 1966 HUAC hearing handing out copies of the Constitution, and by the anti-nuclear weapons sunbathing action of the early 1960s at Brooklyn College. But I also had my heart set on going to Amsterdam because of what I had heard about the Provos.

I had heard about their very militant demonstrations against the royal wedding. On March 10, 1966, Princess Beatrix of Holland married Claus van Amsberg, a German noble who had been in Hitler youth and the Wehrmacht. The slogan for the Provo demonstration was, "I want my bicycle back," a reference to the fact that German soldiers had confiscated Dutch bicycles during the Nazi occupation. But the real lure was the Provo's "white bikes" campaign—free bicycles painted white left throughout the city for anyone to use and then leave on the street for the next person to use. This was a compelling model of visionary communalism for those few in SDS like me who biked to Brooklyn College—our sensible and free form of transportation. So I anticipated finding like-minded people in Amsterdam who would welcome me—I had to check it out.

I met a wide-ranging social network of students and street youth—gay and hetero. It was summer vacation and organized activism was in an ebb. A lot of people were traveling, but people still in Amsterdam had a lot of time on their hands. After a brief session of "imperialist American" baiting—half in jest, but to see how I would respond—I

Susan Simensky Bietila, View 1: 7" × 6"; View 2: 8" × 6"; Be-In, Vondelpark, Amsterdam, July 1967. Gelatin silver prints.

was adopted and cared for. When they found that I was in SDS and had been to the Free University in New York, they quickly warmed up to me. I was introduced to a Provo, Martijn, and he in turn introduced me to another in the group, Barand. They took me to stay at the house of a leading member, Roel van Duijn, who was on vacation in Lapland.[34] Barand showed me a news photo of himself looking fierce in the front line of demonstrators in one of the Provo "White Riots." I later stayed with Johannes van Dam, who was Jewish, gay, and not really a political activist. At the time my hair was very short—think Mia Farrow in the film *Rosemary's Baby*—and I wore jeans and work shirts and no makeup, so people often took me to be lesbian. This was reinforced by my directness and aversion to the repressive female behavioral roles of the time.

The Provo scene sounds like a diverse one—with free transportation.

Unfortunately, the white bicycles weren't readily available. Mainly we walked around in groups, talking about politics, philosophy. Everyone in the political and gay circles I had joined spoke English and more. I was taken to meet "queens" and to private social clubs—kind of like basement punk shows today. It was common for gay and hetero youth to socialize together.

I also went to Provo be-ins at Vondelpark, Amsterdam and was asked to work with an underground network smuggling AWOL Dutch soldiers to safety. They were refusing to fight in New Guinea, where the Dutch were trying to hold on to their last colonial possessions in the region. The soldiers did not speak English, so pretending to be out on a date to escort them from one safe house to another required lots of fake conversations.

The group encouraged me to be a traveling companion with Adinka, the art student I first met hawking *Die Witte Kraut*. There is a photo of her from that period where she is kneeling on the ground and drawing in chalk.

Adinka was going on a trip to visit the family of her brother's fiancé

in Barcelona, Spain, then still a fascist dictatorship ruled by Franco. From there it was off to the island of Ibiza to rendezvous with more of the crowd.[35] I went along and hitchhiked from Barcelona back to Amsterdam later in the summer with Barand.

Tekening „liep" Amsterdam op handen en voeten binnen

Adinka Tellegen, taking part in a continuous chalk drawing from England to the Netherlands, 1967. Newspaper clipping.

Vacationing in fascist Spain was a bit of a contradiction—but certainly it was an education for me. Adinka's brother was engaged to a working-class girl in Spain and we stayed in a blue collar suburb of Barcelona. I knew very little about the Spanish Civil War at that time. Ibiza was a destination spot for northern Europeans, and the vacationers were largely gay men—a very safe spot for girls at night. I was underage for going to clubs and when Barand and some of the other boys arrived, they made sure to sneak me in through windows or back doors.

Hitchhiking back from Barcelona, Barand and I were welcomed in Antwerp by artist friends of his and we spent the night on the floor of an art gallery which had a display of kinetic sculptures that smoked joints. My friends also told me about street performances, poetry recitations by Simon Vinkenoog, "the Allen Ginsberg of the Netherlands," although I did not see these. It was obvious, anyway, that the Provos were actively engaged in a massive European counterculture.

Despite spending time with lots of other boys, I was in a very tentative romantic relationship with a guy named Zeno. He offered to marry me so that I could stay in Amsterdam and be able to go to art school there for free. But I sensed that the relationship would be a very rocky one, conflicted as it would be with a "real" marriage—when neither of us was ready. I also felt a pull to return to New York with a

whole new understanding of artistic and political possibilities.

I would say that I learned about anarchist culture from my friends in Amsterdam, but not identifiable anarchist political theory per se. Provo culture influenced me to look for a political underground newspaper to join when I got back to the US. And it led to my involvement down the line in street theater and street art.

Your return to Brooklyn College in the fall of 1967 was short-lived.

Reinhardt had died that August. When I returned to school, members of the art faculty were shocked and depressed. By that time, I had come to realize that I wasn't learning what I wanted to learn about art in college. I had no workable theory of art and politics, but knew that content, narrative, communication with the average person—art as part of social discourse—was what I wanted to learn. But I was blocked: I didn't understand how to use images to communicate the ideas I felt were important. It wasn't a technical question, it was a philosophical one. The art history classes touched on some of the issues, but as I said, they were heavy on slide recognition and rote memorization.

What I did decide is that if all political art was "propaganda," then I would make propaganda. I had already seen Rubin's guerrilla theater at the HUAC Committee hearing and photographed Bread and Puppet's performances at antiwar demonstrations. When I returned from Amsterdam, I began to look for an apprenticeship situation with an underground publication, where I would have a structure to produce political work. I dropped out of Brooklyn College in November and ended up going to the west coast, attempting to join the staff of *The Movement*, a political underground paper in San Francisco.

What was going on at *The Movement* in terms of artistic production?

There was quite a bit of sophistication. There was an artist, Frank Cieciorka, who did a lot of beautiful work, although I never met him. His clenched fist was iconic. I was invited to some social activities, but

was not included in political discussions or invited to try my hand at an art assignment.

You weren't in San Francisco very long—I understand you were back in New York in the spring of 1968 to finish your degree.

[Back in New York] I set off to look for a "propaganda art" job where I could really learn how to put together an underground publication. I went to the offices of *Rolling Stone* and I told the editor Jann Wenner that I could completely revolutionize his publication, but he booted me out the door. I ended up going to a political underground paper called the *Rat* in the Lower East Side. At that time, the *Rat* had just been started by people I knew from SDS, the "Texas anarchists" and some native New Yorkers. One of the anarchist founders, Jeff Shero, picked the name because a rat was an appropriate image to represent the paper—a tough little city animal, resilient and dangerous. The *Rat* covered the period's political and counterculture movements vividly. But it degenerated rapidly, becoming sensationalist and relying on sex ads for revenue, and publishing demeaning pictures of naked women. It started to look like the *Los Angeles Free Press*, the *East Village Other*, and other non-political underground newspapers as they moved away from radical politics into exploitative trashiness.

I had questions about whether I really belonged there, but asked about opportunities for doing drawing and artwork. I got the sense that women were welcome to do the typing, but not the writing or artwork. So I went further up the street to the *Guardian*, which was pretty much the mainstream leftist newspaper in New York, if you could call it that, a weekly that had been in existence since the 1940s. It was originally the newspaper of the electoral-oriented Progressive Party, which was a "third party" slightly left of the Democratic Party. They hired me immediately, and I told them that I wanted to do drawings, illustrations, and political artwork. I was taught layout, but it only took a few months to convince the editors that I could do original art for articles and the front page.

The best cover I remember doing is the one about the moon landing. I drew Mount Rushmore on the moon [featuring faces of] Walter Cronkite; Monkey Bonnie, one of the animal "astronauts" who died in space; Wernher von Braun, the Nazi missile scientist [von Braun, who died in 1977, went on to develop ballistic missiles for the United States]; and Richard Nixon. I also did a presidential election cover in 1968 when Hubert Humphrey was running against Richard Nixon. I have a collage where there is a body sitting in the presidential chair [of the oval office]. Some anonymous CIA-type is unscrewing the head of one president and putting a new president's head on in its place.

How long were you at the *Guardian*?

I was hired at the *Guardian* in the spring of 1968 during the height of the Vietnam War and quit during a "purge"—driven out by management in August 1969. Right after I had started at the paper, it was redesigned by a graphic designer, Harry Driggs. The masthead was changed from "Progressive" to "Independent Radical Weekly." The editors wanted to appeal to "youth culture" without losing their traditional readership. I was the only artist in the art department; the others did production. They contributed ideas for my artwork and offered insightful critiques with a supportive and collaborative spirit. They were a wonderful group, but were powerless in the *Guardian*'s hierarchy.

The former SDS people were not all in the same camp politically and there were arguments about hierarchy and class among the staff. Even though the [support] staff were all radical activists, they were treated with condescension; their political ideas were discounted because they were not high in the organizational hierarchy compared to the editors, writers, and financial backers. Toward the end, there were big arguments at staff meetings—that's where I found out that management had a different pay scale than other staff while I was literally going hungry working there. During the purge, seven staff were fired and twelve others, including me, walked out in protest.

Then you got a call to join the women's takeover of the *Rat*. The first women-only issue was published in January 1970—with the headline, "Women Seize Rat! Sabotage Tales!" It lists the collective as follows: "Jill Boskey—valiant typesetter for *Rat* for unheralded decades, Jane Alpert, Larelei B., Ruth Beller, Pam Booth, Valerie Bouvier, Naomi Glauberman, Carol Grosberg, Sharon Krebs, Robin Morgan, Jacye Pelcha, Doria Price, Judy Robison, Miriam Rosen, Barbara Rothkrug, Judy Russell, Lisa Schnaeidr, Martha Shelley, Sue Simensky, Brensa Smiley, Christine Sweet, Judy Walento, Cathy Werner, and Mark, Jan, Anton, and Neil"—male staff who stayed on to help out for a while with production until they were asked to leave. Tell me more about the takeover.

Susan Simensky Bietila, Moon Landing cover, The Guardian, *Aug. 2, 1969. Pen and ink collage.*

The women who had been working at the *Rat* all along had been in SDS and other student groups. They were amazingly intelligent and articulate radicals who had been doing all these menial jobs. One day, they got together and invited their friends to come by and put out a special "women's" version of the paper. The issue was so good that we decided that the right thing to do was to continue. It was one of the first feminist newspapers in what's now characterized as the "second wave" of feminism in the United States. The takeover was kind of interrelated with the street theater going on at the time: people involved in the *Rat* had been involved in the feminist demonstration at the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City [September 7, 1968], where the pageant was picketed by women and items of female oppression were

Susan Simensky Bietila, Rat *cover, May 8–21, 1970. Pen and ink.*

symbolically discarded. Nobody actually burned bras, but that's where the whole fictive media image of women burning their bras came from. There was another demonstration that I was actually part of—a takeover of a Bridal Fair [February 1969] at the Felt Forum in Madison Square Garden. We took over the stage and auctioned off a bride! The *Rat* women attended meetings held by a range of feminist radical "consciousness-raising," activist-oriented groups, as well as others—it was all one interlocking network.

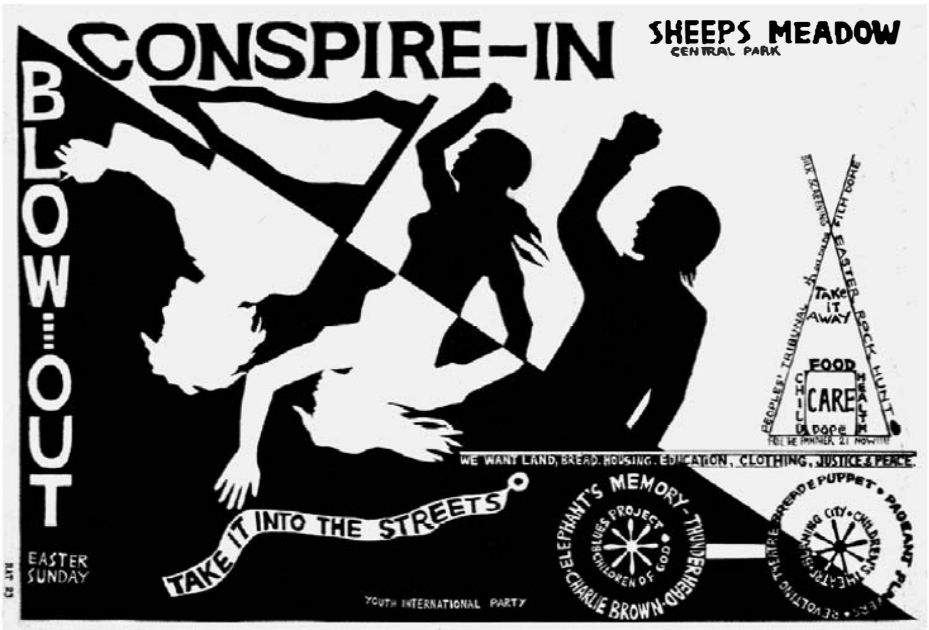
This was the same period that the anarchist Yippies were active in New York. There were lots of great political stunts going on, like in August 1968, when Yippies threw dollars off the balcony at the Stock Exchange and watched the stockbrokers scramble over each other, groveling on the floor. It was influential. The theatrical presentation of political ideas was a shared aesthetic.

The overlap between radical feminism and anarchism on the level of organizational tactics and artistic protest strategies is interesting. I recall that "WITCH"—Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell—was the key initiator of the Bridal Fair action and there was at least one crossover from the *Rat* collective—Robin Morgan. In her memoir *Going Too Far,* Morgan characterizes WITCH—disparagingly—as a "proto-anarchist" Yippie-influenced group, so the connection has at least been acknowledged.[36] What was it like to participate in such an outrageous action?

It was tremendously liberating. It was absolutely a celebration of freedom from the soul-binding of the female submissive role. I was freeing myself as compared with being a crusader against other people's oppression, no matter how just, no matter how linked to my own situation. Disrupting a Bridal Fair was certainly outrageous enough to be unanticipated by Madison Square Garden security. But it was very logical, quite a clear target. What was outrageous was not being allowed into the college library wearing pants, not being allowed to go out at night on your own; if you danced without a male partner, it was unacceptable. It was outrageous to be judged, despite your talent and intellect, by your marriageability. I was really angry at it all.

I was not part of the group who came up with the idea for the action, but I was invited to participate in the planning. One of the women who worked at a publication had access to free tickets. The action was well-planned ideologically, with delineated strategic and theatrical roles. The demonstration confronted common cultural assumptions, such as "Every girl dreams of being a bride." The modern wedding was exposed as a romanticization of women as property—the transfer of a woman from the father to her husband. In addition, it directly questioned consumer culture, because the Bridal Fair was, after all, about buying bridal gowns, flowers, china, and silver. I still think that it was an excellent action and disagree with Morgan and others who have gone more mainstream and think that the critique of marriage consumerism was an attack on women.

Thinking further about the often-ignored anarchist influence, the shared prankster-style activism of the Yippies, WITCH, and the Provos was no accident. In his 1979 memoir, Abbie Hoffman recalls that during the period of 1965–68, the Yippies in New York were in contact with their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere.[37] Hoffman mentions Fritz Teufel, Karl Pawla, and Kimmune #1 in Berlin, and Jean-Jacques Lebel in Paris, who came to the United States and played a role linking "the anarchism of the Left Bank [Paris] to the street culture of Haight-Ashbury [San



Susan Simensky Bietila, Yippee Be-In Poster, Rat, *March 7–21, 1970. Cut paper, pen and ink.*

Francisco] and the Lower East Side." He also emphasizes the importance of the Provos:

> In Amsterdam ... street players dubbed themselves the Provos (short for provocateurs). Practicing the politics of 'free' they opened parks to free concerts, established crash pads [free housing], and ladled out soup to moneyless hungry customers. Their symbol became the white bicycle. Second-hand wheelies were painted white and left around the city. Whoever needed one could take one, pedal away, and leave it at another location for the next.... [They] established a community ambience that would be held up as a model by all of us. Dana Beal picked up on the Provos and founded a chapter on the Lower East Side.

That's Hoffman's recollection—can you say more about anarchism in New York?

In my exploration of the political world, I came across the Free University in 1965–66. This school was started by Allen Krebs and then run by Sharon Krebs, and classes were taught by a member of the anarchist Fugs rock band and by Murray Bookchin. I never attended classes, but I went there to hang out and it fueled my imagination.

Here is what Roy Lisker, one of the instructors, wrote about the Free University when you were attending:

> The people that Allen Krebs engaged to set up the Free University of New York represented every shade of opinion across the New Left: poets and writers, disaffected scholars, union organizers, activists, free-lance journalists, and publishers, creative individuals of every sort. Our goal from the beginning was to establish a forum in which every direction of contemporary political activism would be represented. Courses were to be taught by persons actually involved in bringing about the changes they were advocating.
>
> The curriculum for the first two terms contained, in addition to those on leftist politics, courses ranging from hallucinatory drugs to sexual liberation to astrology. Important courses were offered that were not available, or even imaginable, at many main-stream universities: History of the American Left (Staughton Lynd); History of the Labor Movement (Stanley Aronowitz); Cuba Today; Training in non-violent tactics; History of the National Liberation Front. Paul Krassner [a Yippie], editor of the scathing and satiric political magazine, *The Realist*, gave a course entitled "Why the *New York Times* is funnier than *Mad Magazine*." The enthusiasm that prevailed in the first term of the Free University of New York, from November '65 to February '66, carried over into the spring. It was an inspiring time for all concerned.[38]

The Free University was one place where anarchists made themselves known. I have been told that anarchists were also a real presence at anti-Vietnam War demonstrations.

In terms of actions, anarchist affinity groups for street demonstrations were into satire and self-satire. Wearing motorcycle helmets and leather jackets, our fists in the air, we played the role of militant demonstrator, but knew that it was more theatrical, in opposition to other segments of the anti-war movement who were in essence begging, pleading, and lobbying those same politicians responsible for the war in the first place. Demonstrators were relegated to being, in essence, little more than numbers used as lobbying capital by mainstream liberal leaders—a futile and depressing strategy. Networks of anti-imperialist affinity groups went on "vote in the streets, vote with your feet" split-offs from every major demonstration. While the big antiwar coalitions were demanding the gradual withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam—"Support our troops, Bring them home"—we were calling for "victory to the Vietnamese!" and admission that the war was wrong in the first place. I remember one such split-off from a very large picket of a Democratic Party event at an upscale midtown hotel. Word was passed to disperse and converge on Wall Street, the power behind the war-makers. Thousands of demonstrators went downtown by subway and ran a gauntlet ahead of mounted police to the sound of crashing plate glass. This kind of action declared, "no to business-as-usual." Radical scholars kept tabs on the war-profiteering corporations and made the locations of the military industrial complex common knowledge, opening them up to exposure for complicity during demonstrations.

I should also mention there were a lot of street anarchists at the *Guardian*. They weren't only the writers and editors; they were the delivery people, people in the art department, and the typists—young, like me. It was pretty much an anarchist youth culture. There were also plenty of what would now be called anarchist affinity groups and collectives that were active on the Lower East Side.

More importantly, I had become part of a movement that was be-

coming "articulate"— working in groups which operated by consensus and where ideas were developed collectively. Every organization I was involved with had a "bottom up" (anarchist) ethic—decision by consensus, encouraging participation in decision-making on an equal basis—as a matter of principle. My politics were clearly anarchist, but not identified as such during the 1960s, because the political dividing line in the movements of that time, anti-Vietnam War, black liberation, women's liberation, etc., was between anti-imperialist radical social change and reformism. I was also becoming more class-conscious and identified anarchism as mainly influential in terms of cultural expression—despite reading Emma Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life*, as well as *Labor's Untold Story* [by Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais] during that time.

People I knew in SDS who identified as anarchist included Shero from Austin SDS (the "Texas anarchists"), who turned me away from the *Rat* when I asked to do artwork there. Unfortunately, other self-identified anarchists in New York, all of them male, came across as intensely chauvinist. Many of them were associated with the 1950s Beat poets who were as infamous as the male artists among the abstract expressionists for treating women like dirt. So I did not really identify with anarchism as a contemporary movement.

So sexism, a generational disconnect, and your own prioritizing of "class struggle" over "culture"—in retrospect a false dichotomy, obviously—were factors: was there anything else?

At the *Guardian*, how people labeled themselves politically often bore little connection to how they behaved. Pockets of anarchist ideas about decision-making existed in various departments. Work styles and networks within the staff defied political self-definitions as anarchist, socialist, new left, feminist.

The "anarchists" at the *Guardian* were in affinity groups that carried National Liberation Front flags at anti-war demonstrations and actual pigs' heads on pikes labeled with the names of prominent liberals, like Bobby Kennedy.[39] I marched with them on more than a few oc-

casions, but kept my distance because of their uncritical hero worship of the Black Panther Party and loyalty to "fearless leaders" like Walter Teague and his Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front.[40] Teague was a one-man "organization" who recruited younger, blindly loyal kids to work for him. There was no consciousness of working collectively there whatsoever. My position was that the best thing that people could do was to continue to build a powerful movement against the government and to limit its ability to conduct unjust wars like the one in Vietnam in the future. Idolizing the Vietnamese "liberation fighters" was not the way to actually help people in Vietnam.

Not the typical activist position—there was a lot of messy thinking back then that, in the absence of an anarchist critique, led to some serious contradictions. Marxists and the movements influenced by them argued for social liberation via authoritarian party organizing and the establishment of state dictatorships.

"Dictatorships of the proletariat" to overthrow capitalism—dictatorships which were supposed to eventually wither away. At the *Guardian*, most of the staff, including the outspoken anarchists, were uncritical toward the hierarchical structures of the Black Panther Party and the NLF. I certainly supported both, but not as a "true believer" looking for a perfect leader. Many among the affinity groups were just as eager as the Weathermen to prove to the Panthers that they were "heavies" and "down" for the revolution which they expected to happen momentarily.[41] I was vocal in criticizing these ideas as being out of touch with reality, but few were listening. A lot of "revolutionaries" were driven by guilt about their own "white privilege" and did not want to recognize [that] class oppression existed among white people. I had a few close friends who also came from blue-collar backgrounds who had similar criticisms of these trends and had less patience than I did, or less incentive to engage in the argument at all. We were often a distinct affinity group at demonstrations.

What about the *Rat* during this time?

Working on *Rat* became more and more contentious by the week. The collective members had diverse political views. Some had been in SDS, and among them were women aligned with opposite sides of the divide when SDS split into the Revolutionary Youth Movement factions, some aligned with the Weathermen and others with the groups looking to organize the working class. Then there were women who were in New York Radical Women and Redstockings—the feminist theorists involved in "consciousness-raising" groups.[42] There were lesbian activists who were to soon be part of the formation of the Gay Liberation Front [founded in New York in 1969] and women from Third World support movements, anti-imperialist and radical movements. Many of us were in anti-imperialist circles as well as feminist consciousness-raising groups.

My disaffection with the *Rat* came with the first wave of identity politics. By August 1970, there was pressure to have an editorial quota system—so many pages of the paper devoted to women of color, so many to lesbians, etc. I believed that there ought to be a unified movement to fight against all oppression and saw identity politics as divisive and depressing. Many of the women at the *Rat* came to believe that working exclusively within the women's movement was the only revolutionary path, and accused women who gravitated toward activism in other movements as lacking adequate political consciousness and being traitors, rather than simply having a different analysis of how to change society. So I left the *Rat* collective before the divisiveness became even more demoralizing.

Returning to art, how was visual art looked upon during that time in relation to radical social change?

That's a whole other can of worms, I would say. On the one hand, there were artists who were doing political work, but in the mainstream of the political movement, art was an afterthought. The big

political debates were about the war and US imperialism, that sort of thing. The general values enacted in the dynamics of SDS and the publications, even feminist publications, were that days and sleepless nights were spent haggling over wording.

During your last year at college, you exhibited your political artwork, but it was not well-received.

I recall having no real preparation for my thesis show, which took place in late 1968. It seemed a spur-of-the-moment thing. I was working at the *Guardian*, with a weekly thirty-six-hour marathon to produce each issue, carrying a full course load of very facile education classes with the idea of teaching high school art, and dating a jazz musician who was playing clubs until two a.m. There was no one to advise me about how to mount a show.

The exhibition was in La Guardia Hall. Art was hung on movable display structures with panels. It was dimly lit—the only light source came from the ceiling towering above. I had one or two of these panels on which to hang my work. I deliberately chose work from the *Guardian*. I also exhibited my prints, which were figurative but without obvious narrative. All these prints would be published in the *Guardian*, *Rat*, or *Liberation Magazine* over the next three years.

Most prominently displayed was the photo-collage and painted *Guardian* cover with the presidential heads. This was obviously an intentional protest against the separation of politics and art, but even more directly a defiance of the prohibition against exactly the kind of work which the faculty defined as *not* fine art—art with topical narrative, art with intent to communicate, art with an obvious political message. The quality of art I displayed didn't matter; the cant was, "political art isn't fine art"—any art which commented on contemporary events would be obsolete the next day whereas "real" art, "fine art," "high art"—is eternal.

To my best recollection, the most hostile reaction to my art was from Jimmy Ernst, who refused to talk to me at the exhibition open-

ing. He looked very angry. I came across several documents which shed light on Ernst's thoughts on art and politics at the time. There are two articles, one titled "A Letter to Artists of the Soviet Union," published in the *Art Journal* after Ernst was sent on a tour of the Soviet Union by the State Department in 1961.[43] His mission was to condemn socialist realism and promote the virtues of abstraction—abstraction is equated with "freedom."[44] Quite the Cold Warrior. He also wrote a manifesto for UNESCO, "Freedom of Expression in the Arts," published in a 1965 issue of the *Art Journal*.[45]

He repeats many principles with which I would strongly agree in theory, but in his context are highly questionable. He is against artists being "forced to serve a 'revolution' which was lost long ago to those who fear the open mind and find comfort only in the various practices of anti-intellectualism." His statement is a thinly veiled diatribe against the Soviet Union at a time when identical criticisms of McCarthyite censorship in America were long overdue. He writes:

> Art is indeed a means of communication which knows no border and is above the barrier of the linguistic.... No society or state has ever been able to hide its own shortcomings behind the screen of a carefully nurtured and directed culture.... A state that fears and represses its own intellectual minority can ill afford to stand before the world as a champion of international peace.

He advocates a "world community" of artists and asserts that "Art as a cohesive core of culture ... [is] at all times the open enemy of political or intellectual intolerance." He writes this but then a few years later, he is fuming over art which takes aim at the very forces he claims to oppose. The party line at Brooklyn College—the denigration of politically charged art and the elevation of so-called "fine art" devoid of socially-engaged import—strikes me as an ethical dead end, riddled with inconsistencies.

Reinhardt and Ernst had both painted themselves into very con-

flicted positions, no pun intended. And there I was, supposedly the "star" pupil, seeing the hypocrisy and stifled by it. The thesis show was a declaration of my own identity as well as an attempt to force some sort of truth out into the open. Compulsory abstraction in art and the separation of "fine art" from "poster art" was the opposite pole of the same stupidity dominating the arts in the Soviet Union—the Cold War in art theory. I was looking for a way to express my anger and make art which spoke to the present world situation. At the time, I knew little of the history of the betrayal of the anarchist movement in Spain by the Communists and its effect on the intellectual left in New York, which was of course a major influence on the politics of abstract expressionism. But I knew a lot about McCarthyism and felt that this was the cause of the Art Department's extreme narrowness of discourse. The *Guardian* artwork in my senior thesis was no doubt art serving the revolution, albeit an altogether different kind of "revolution." The line had been drawn in the sand and I crossed it.

So that was the treatment you received from the Brooklyn College-based art establishment. How was your art treated at the *Guardian*, the *Rat*, and by activists generally?

When I started doing art for publications, there was little understanding that there was any importance to it, and no understanding of my idea that you could have political discussions about imagery. Art work itself came way after the debate of the issues and the politics, rather than being part of a single fabric, whereas I had an image in my mind of a real synthesis of politics and art—that there could be a language of imagery that was meant to communicate. Using metaphor, the history of images, referencing the history of art, I would come up with powerful art that could be read and understood.

There was no sophisticated discussion of your art in the radical scene?

It never happened at the *Guardian* or at the *Rat*. There were groups

who were thinking about literature and theater critically, but visual art was a kind of stepchild of it all.

Your work for the *Rat* is really distinctive and has an incredible energy to it. I'd like to learn more about some of your specific illustrations. In the "Conspire-In" poster for the Yippie "Be-In" at the Sheeps Meadow, Central Park gathering of Easter Sunday, 1970, reproduced in one of *Rat*'s March 1970 issues, I see various symbols with text incorporated into it, along with an interesting negative/positive dichotomy involving clenched fists and open hands. Then there are the "Trading Cards" featuring political "outlaws" of the era, which were reproduced in the *Rat* and intended to be cut out and passed around like trading cards.

It's really hard to remember what was going through my mind when I was doing the "Conspire-In" poster or the "Trading Cards" page. What I can say with certainty was that I was asked to do the Yippee's poster for their Central Park Be-In by one of the guys in the loose affinity group network on the Lower East Side. There was no particular request as to the imagery, and I thought that cut-outs would provide a stark eye-catching device. The demonstrators' posture and dress was an accurate rendering of how we looked when we went to a demonstration. The tepee emblem [which later served as a squatters' symbol in the 1980s] was likely lifted from whatever sheet of information I was given with the text needed on the poster. It was not my own creation.

The "Outlaws of America Trading Cards" was a group project at the *Rat*. I did most of the drawings, but the text and selection of characters was the result of free-ranging discussion into the late night by any and all participants during the layout of the issue. The general process was that the collective would meet to decide on the stories for each issue. The *Rat* women and some male friends would return with their articles at the arranged time, which they would type out on manual typewriters. Each woman doing layout would be given the blank layout boards for two facing pages and the columns of the arti-

cles clipped to them. She was free to design the pages and to choose or create the artwork. Headlines were sometimes provided by the author and at other times decided on by whoever was interested in participating in the decision; these were either hand-lettered or placed down on pages with press type. The office was one large room with tilted tables built along the walls to work on the pages. It was therefore possible to stroll around the room and glance at the entire paper as it was being created. Once the copy was assigned to each page and space was allotted for the articles, the size dimensions of the artwork and which articles they were to accompany became apparent.

Moving on to present-day, you've been busy. Your art has appeared in *World War 3—Illustrated*, a political graphic arts magazine, and you contributed to *Wobblies!*, an immensely popular illustrated history of the anarchist-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World union; your photographs have appeared in a number of anarchist publications; you co-curated *Drawing Resistance*, a traveling exhibition of anarchist/activist art that toured across Canada and the United States between 2001 and 2005 (see color plate 12); and you've been involved in puppet-making and some very innovative demonstrations. It seems to me there are a whole range of opportunities for an artist within the contemporary anarchist scene. Is it fair to say that current activism is healthier, from an artistic point of view, than it was in the 1960s?

Yes! The current scene is much healthier, and everything I've been doing has led to even more exciting possibilities. There are so many more ways for my art to get into the world—so many ways to collaborate, so many ways for art to find its way to people who are interested and appreciative. I have continued to do artwork in collaboration with activist groups and for publication and exhibition continuously, but the past ten years are far better than anything I have experienced before.

But my purpose is not to do art within the anarchist scene, although I am certainly nurtured by it in the broad sense. Anarchism

Su an Simensky Bietila and others, Outlaws of Amerika Trading Cards, Rat, *March 7-21, 1970. Pen and ink.*

needs to be more than a self-limited subculture. Art should inspire critical thinking and operate in the public sphere—be seen, understood, and embraced by a much wider audience—by people who agree and are inspired as well as those who disagree. Actually, I see a great danger in making art which is meant primarily for insiders within a "scene," especially when that scene is largely a self-segregated youth counterculture, which is the case where I live.

To clarify, when I refer to "the contemporary anarchist scene," I have in mind the larger anarchist community, including people like yourself in Milwaukee or the *World World 3* artists in New York, for example—which is strong, dynamic, intergenerational, and definitely activist, and outward looking, not "subcultural," as you describe it. But tell me more about your recent art-making.

I was involved in lot of street theater in the late 1980s—performance with puppets and stilt-walkers protesting against American imperialism in Central America, against CIA recruitment on a college campus, for women's reproductive rights and more—and in the '90s against the destruction of urban green space and against threats by mining companies taking over indigenous people's land and resources. So the flowering of political performance worldwide in recent years, involving giant puppets and floats, especially inspired me. I've been photographing political street theater and treasure the opportunities to document it. I'm someone who lives very much in the present, and only with much time have I come to the realization of how important it is to preserve the history of radical movements.

I started graduate school during this period, and approached printmaking and photography with greater sophistication in imagery and metaphor. I started to do art which worked on multiple levels, with art historical and philosophical references instead of straightforward agitational pieces. I found that even straightforward political work was no longer excluded dogmatically from gallery shows. But what really made a difference for me was going to the Active Resistance gath-

Susan Simensky Bietila, Self Portrait, *2006. Pen and ink wash.*

erings in 1996 and 1998. I went at the urging of one of my children, who was involved and thought that I would meet people I really liked there, and he was right. It was through these gatherings that I met many of the political artists with whom I continue to collaborate. In addition, I was invited to photograph these gatherings and the photographs continue to appear in wonderful publications.

It was at the Chicago AR gathering that I met David Solnit, and people from the *Fifth Estate* journal, the Beehive Collective of artists, the A-Zone anarchist social center ... and I began to learn about the new wave of anarchist activism and art. At the 1998 AR gathering in Toronto, things only got better.

In 1998, I was in New York visiting family and went to the art opening of Seth Tobocman's show of work from "War in the Neighborhood." I had visited some of the artists from *World War 3* in the early 1980s, soon after it was started, when I was part of a poetry and art zine called *The Stake*, but had never met Seth before. He introduced me to other artists who drew political comix and invited me to do art for the magazine. I had been working almost exclusively with photography and was really into photo-collage, but he insisted that drawn narrative was the only format for the publication. I was surprised when he said that he was familiar with my work from the past and on that basis knew that I would be able to do story-board work. I was really delighted, and more than a bit surprised at the invitation. I continue to hold the artists who draw for *World War 3* in great esteem.

At this same time also, I was active at home in Wisconsin opposing the Crandon Mine, inspired by the amazing diversity of the groups in-

volved—from indigenous communities and environmentalists to duck hunters and fishermen. We were all part of a coalition against Exxon, Rio Algom, and then Billeton and their attempts to build a zinc and copper mine along the pristine Wolf River, next to where the Mole Lake Chippewa harvest wild rice, in the midst of beautiful national forests and directly upstream from the Menominee Reservation. In addition to the usual graphics, posters, banners, and flags for demonstrations and photo documentation, there were more innovative projects. After David Solnit and Alli Shagi Starr visited Milwaukee, we built a giant puppet of Tommy Thompson, the pro-mining Governor, and dressed him in a fool's cap. The puppet is still around ten years later, and has been passed around from group to group. After that I made a movable installation—thirty gravestones dedicated to rivers poisoned by mining around the world. Several wonderful anti-mining activists provided the research and helped conceive the project. The tombstones were only cardboard mounted on the wires used for election yard signs, but the show traveled for years to roadsides near sites threatened by mining in Wisconsin. It was important to me because it was effective for rural and reservation settings, places where installation and political art are not common.

My family and I had lived communally for many years, and I met [graphic artist] Nicolas Lampert when he and [film artist] Laura Klein answered our posting for housemates when they first moved to Milwaukee. We collaborated on a block print, "I need community," shortly before he went to the 1999 anti-World Trade Organization demonstration in Seattle and returned full of ideas. We decided that a traveling art show was an immediate possibility. We wanted to put together a show of all of our favorite artists and at the same time to make the point that political art is quite diverse in "look" and strategy of communication. We named the show, *Drawing Resistance*, stealing Emily Abendroth's phrase to "Celebrate Communities of Resistance," and wanted to bring it to people who would never ordinarily be exposed to art with this sort of content. We decided that the show's tour must be compatible with the politics it displayed, and Nicolas's

Installation of "Tombstones" at Wisconsin Capitol. Monuments to rivers poisoned by mining. April 2000.

experiences touring with his band Noisegate provided the model for an art show as DIY punk-band-on-tour. Almost every artist we invited agreed to lend work, despite no assurance that the art would return from tour intact. The hosts for the show in each city had to transport the works to the next stop on the tour. There was no funding other than collections taken up at the door to provide gas money, etc. *Drawing Resistance* had thirty-three exhibitions across the United States and Canada and traveled for four years.

It was a great deal of work assembling the show, but what is important to me is that it happened. The show helped build networks of artists and communities as well as get excellent art out to people who had enthusiasm for it. It tapped potentials for collaboration and articulated our politics in practice. I wish that more people were thinking this way.

For me, making art is driven by collaboration with political movements. Invite me to be part of a worthwhile project where there is real collaboration and I'm ready to do my part and more. What inspires me is knowing that the art will be seen and travel to places that I will never go. It is part of me, but takes on a life of its own, going out into

Color Plate 10:
Susan Simensky Bietila, Bread and Puppet Theater performance at the anti-Vietnam War March to UN Headquarters, New York, April 15, 1967. Gelatin/silver print, 5¼" × 7¾".

COLOR PLATE 11:
Susan Simensky Bietila, Arrest at the Demonstration Against Military Recuiters, Brooklyn College, 1967, *2006. Pen and ink wash on paper, 8" × 7".*

drawing resistance

a traveling political art show

2001→2005

"art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it." -bertolt brecht

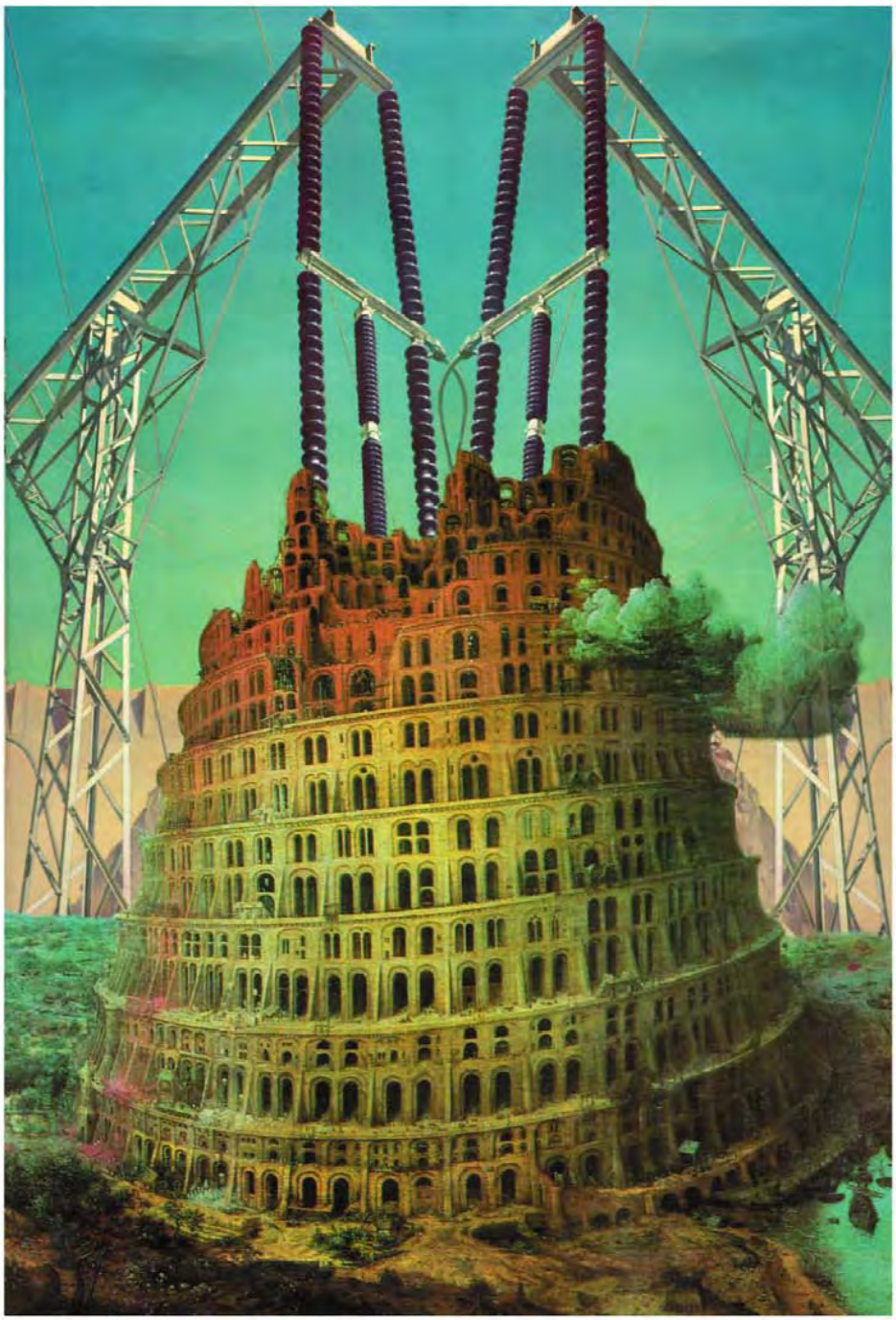
"the most violent element in society is ignorance." -emma goldman

emily abendroth, freddie baer, diana berek, julie beauchamp, sue simensky bratila, katie burkart, robbie conal, carlos cortez, domitila dominguez, eric drooker, kehben gritter, sabrina jones, peter kuper, nicolas lampert, josh macphee, juan manchu, mac mcgill, fernando marti, doug minkler, richard mock, ricardo levins morales, mabel negrete, iris pasic, antonio ramirez, corinne rhodes, nicole schulman, andy singer, wieston smith rocky tobey, seth tobocman, john yates

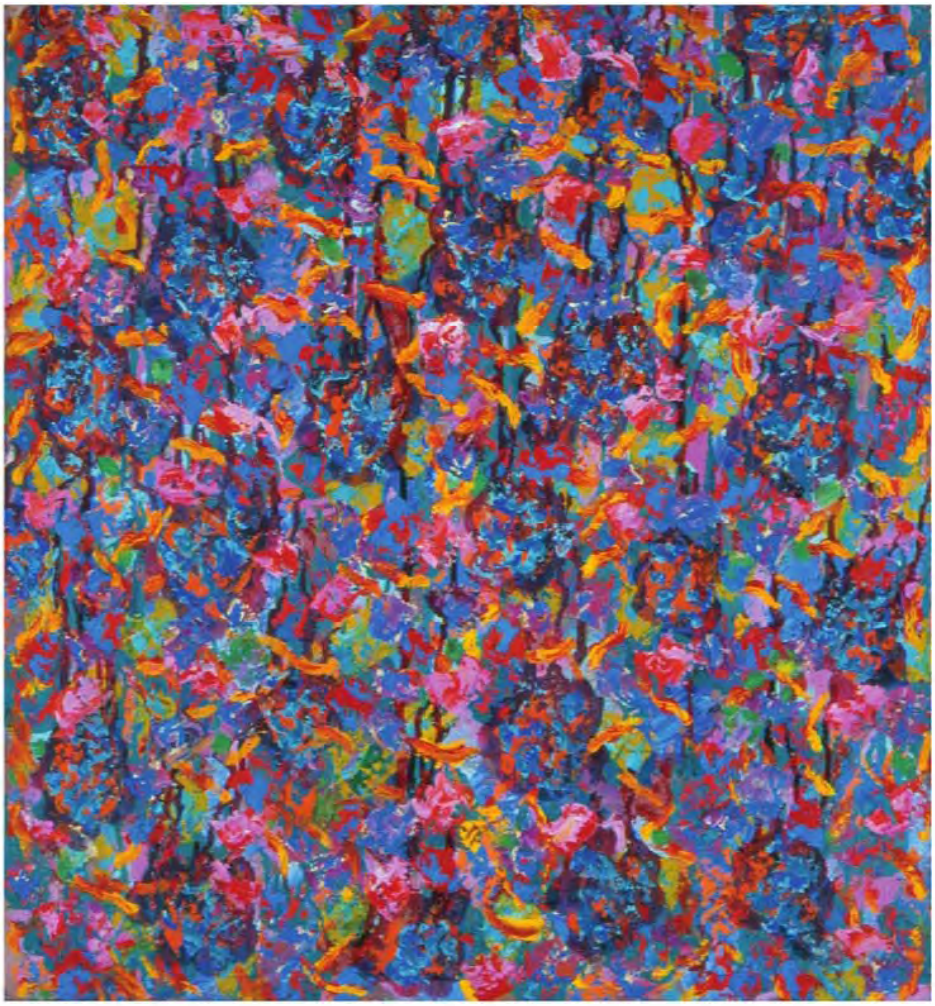
www.drawingresistance.org

Color Plate 12: *(facing page)*
Susan Simensky Bietila, Drawing Resistance *Poster, with woodcut by Iris Pasic, 2001.*
11" x 17".

Color Plate 13: *(above)*
Gee Vaucher, Nagasaki Nightmare, *poster, 1980. Black gouache painting, 30 cm x 21 cm.*



Color Plate 14:
Book cover image by Freddie Baer, for Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire and its Enemies, *by David Watson, 1998. 6" × 9".*



Color Plate 15:
Richard Mock, untitled, 1995. Oil on linen, 24" x 22".

Color Plate 16:
Richard Mock, Strike Zone, *1991. Linocut print, 20" × 15¾".*

Chapter 8

With Open Eyes

Anarchism and the Fall of the Berlin Wall

> *I think the current era has ominous portent—and signs of great hope. What result ensues depends on what we make of the opportunities.*
> —Noam Chomsky, 1995[1]

On November 9, 1989, Communist Party rule in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union came to a dramatic end with the breaching of the Berlin wall, leaving many leftists in the capitalist west perplexed and disoriented.[2] Some argued that a "genuinely new and emancipatory" form of socialism—to quote Nancy Fraser—might miraculously emerge from "the wreak," while others framed the historical moment as a stark choice between "socialism or barbarism"—with barbarism coming out on top in the absence of a "left opposition" calling for "workers' democracy, a working class state, and a political revolution that would restore the possibility of Communism."[3] The prevailing position was summed up by Fred Halliday in *New Left Review*: "An essential precondition for any viable socialism in the West," he wrote, "is a degree of combativity towards the very system it's challenging. Whatever their other faults, the traditional Communist parties embodied that quality"—but now, with the collapse of Communism in the east, they had ceased to do so.[4] The solution? Return to Communism's "point of origin," namely "the critique of, and challenge to, capitalist political economy" initiated by Marx.[5] Of course, from an anarchist

perspective, going back to Marx was hardly the place from which to build a libertarian movement. In the years leading up to the fall of the wall, anarchists were otherwise engaged in the development of strategies that were distinctly anti-authoritarian and true to a critique of oppression in all its guises.

Anarchist-pacifism was one such strategy, expressed first and foremost in the art of Gee Vaucher, illustrator for the punk rock band Crass. Originating out of the British music scene in the mid-1970s, punk was loosely associated with anarchism from its inception, thanks to the Sex Pistols. Songs like "Anarchy in the UK" (1976), which the group's manager Malcolm McLaren described as "a statement of self-assertion, of ultimate self-rule, of do-it-yourself," inspired thousands of fans to explore anarchist politics.[6] However, the Sex Pistols' propagation of anarchism was more a publicity stunt than a political act, and their eagerness to sign on with commercial record companies was generally viewed as a betrayal of anti-capitalist principles.[7] This left Crass to point the way forward.[8]

Formed in 1977 by Penny Rimbaud and run as a collective, Crass (the core membership of nine was occasionally augmented by others) created its own not-for-profit record company and committed itself to promoting anarchism in whatever way it could. The band financed activist publications, organized benefits for squatters and rape crisis centers, raised money for anarchists accused of plotting a bombing campaign, and helped found an Anarchist Centre in London.[9] The group's resident artist, Vaucher, was a talented illustrator, collage artist, and former member of the London-based performance art collective, EXIT (1968–1972).[10] Between 1978 and 1984 (the year the group disbanded), Vaucher produced artwork for a slew of Crass record covers, five issues of an illustrated political journal entitled *International Anthem*, and numerous posters.

The cornerstone of Crass's anarchism was a combination of class war and pacifism. In a March 1981 interview for the punk journal *Flipside*, band members condemned statist politics in the capitalist and Communist spheres on the grounds that both were violent and coer-

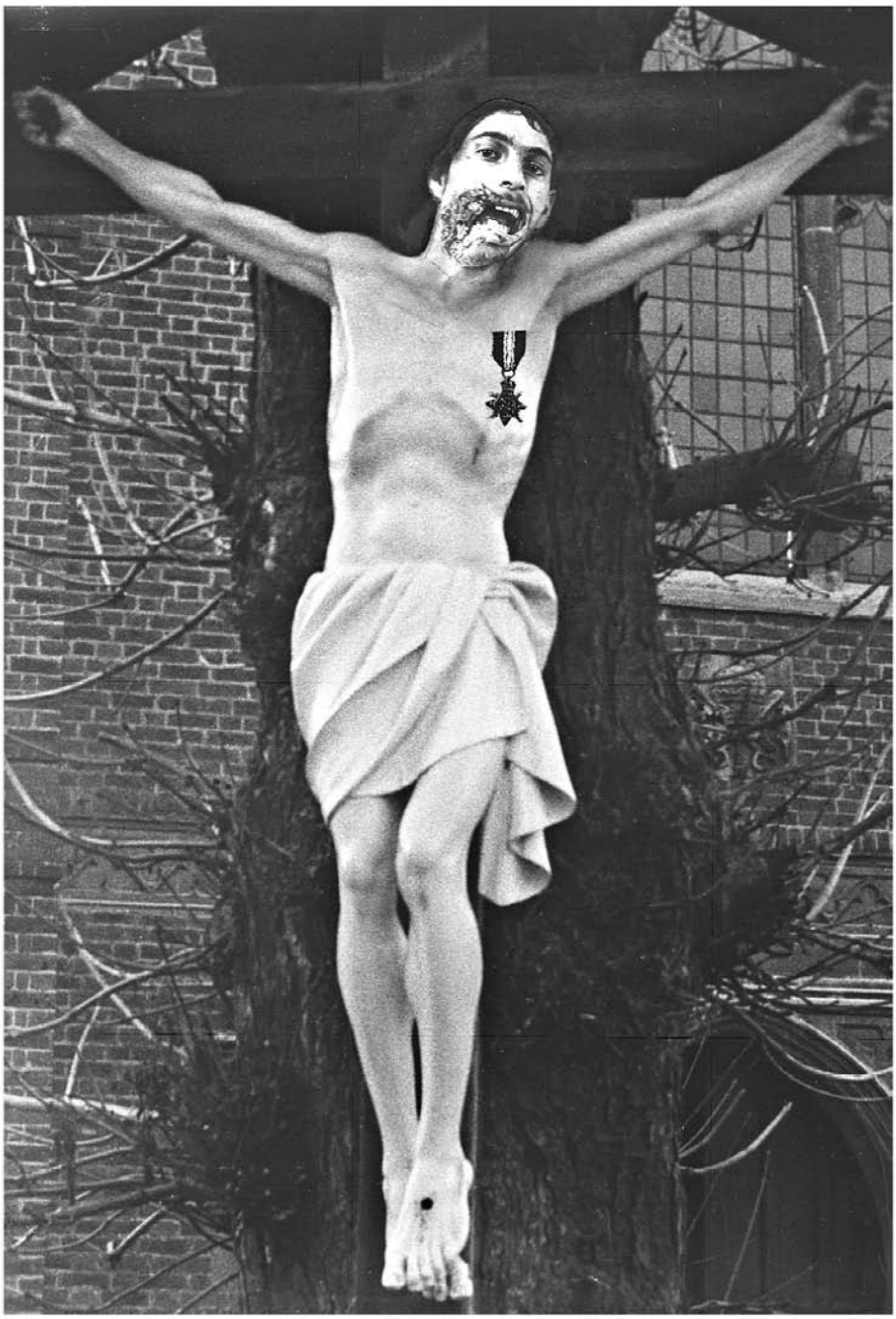
cive. "Anarchism," they related, "is the only form of political thought that does not seek to control the individual through force.... Anarchy is the rejection of state control and represents a demand by the individual to live a life of personal choice, not one of political manipulation.... By refusing to be controlled you are taking your own life into your own hands and that is, rather than the popular idea of anarchy as chaos, the start of personal order."[11] However, the rejection of state violence was not a blanket renunciation of the right to resist. The members of Crass were careful to emphasize that they stood "against organized militarism, believing that the use of power to control people is a violation of human dignity"; however, when "power threatened to directly violate" an individual, one had the right to "stand against it in whatever way was necessary to prevent it," including "the possibility of force."[12]

When performing, Crass displayed three banners: the circled A anarchy symbol; the peace symbol; and the Crass logo, which attacked the pillars of oppression in Britain—the patriarchal family, church, and state. "Part national flag, part cross, part swastika," writes Rimbaud, the logo's "circular design broke on its own edges into serpents' heads, suggesting that the power it represented was about to consume itself."[13] An insert poster for the Crass single "Nagasaki Nightmare" (1980) (see color plate 13) illustrates the band's stance towards state power in its Communist and capitalist guises. Vaucher depicts leaders of the world's five great nuclear powers (China, Britain, France, Russia, and the United States) and aspiring members to this elite "club" (Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, for example), grouped together as if for a "photo op" amid the flattened ruins of Nagasaki. Three Japanese atomic bomb victims and the bomb itself exploding in the distance add to the horror. The politicians' shared willingness to "do it again"—as the song relates—is symbolized by the jovial demeanor of American President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev as they reach out to shake hands over the charred corpse of a child.[14]

The visceral impact of "Nagasaki Nightmare" was matched by Vaucher's productions during the Falklands War. In spring 1982, an

Argentinian military dictatorship went to war with Britain over the Falklands, a small grouping of islands off the coast of South America (the islands were claimed by Britain in 1690 and formally designated as a colonial holding in the early twentieth century). The war lasted from March to June, when Argentinian forces surrendered unconditionally after suffering heavy losses at the hands of the British navy and air force. In Britain, the unpopular Conservative Party government of Margaret Thatcher successfully renewed its prospects for reelection the following year by rallying the population behind pro-war jingoism. This development stunned Crass, given the actions of the government up to that point. As Rimbaud relates, after coming to power in 1979, Thatcher had "set about dismantling everything that was worthwhile about the Welfare State. In the new 'enterprise culture' compassion would become a dirty word as entrepreneurs licked their lips and Thatcher's arse alike in their rush to buy up the country's assets. Just as working-class values would be derided, so the poor would be accused of having brought about their own fate.... To Thatcher and her cronies they were wasters, layabouts, and good-for-nothings who deserved no more than the blow of her iron fist or the toe of a policeman's boot."[15] And yet once Thatcher declared war, the masses had fallen in lock-step.

In a post-war essay adapted into lyrics for Crass's 1983 album, "Yes Sir, I Will," Rimbaud underlined the paradox: "Tory policies required massive unemployment, but it was they who demanded that 'we should support our lads in the Falklands,' those very same lads, who if they were at home, would be jobless in the streets."[16] "Yes Sir, I Will" ends with a plea for the working class to wake up to their own oppression and rise up against the state and the ruling class it served: "It is you, the passive observer, who has given them their power. It is you, and only you, who can withdraw it. You are being used and abused, and will be discarded as soon as they've bled what they want from you. You must learn to live with your own conscience, your own morality, your own decisions, and your own self. You alone can do it. There is no authority but yourself."[17] This is followed by an addendum: "A squaddy



Gee Vaucher, Yes Sir, I Will *album cover, 1983. Collage, 32 cm × 25 cm.*

Gee Vaucher, Yes Sir, I Will *insert poster*, *1983*.

[slang for soldier], horrifically burnt in the Falklands War, was approached by Prince Charles during a presentation. 'Get well soon' said the Prince, to which the squaddy replied, 'Yes Sir, I will.'"

Vaucher's poster for the album, "Yes Sir, I Will," reproduced the text of this exchange and a tabloid newspaper photograph of the incident. The spectacle of the horribly disfigured soldier spoke volumes about the grotesque inanity of a dutiful working-class war victim acquiescing to authority by indulging "his" Prince in the comforting fiction that he would ever "get well." The theme of self-sacrifice and submission also graced the album cover, where Vaucher collaged the figure of an emaciated soldier, war medal pinned to his chest, crucified against a bleak industrial backdrop.

The soldier's face—a gaping wound, half ripped away, revealing his teeth and jaw bone—was taken from an anti-war photo book, *War Against War!*, published by the German anarchist-pacifist Ernst Friedrich in 1924.[18] In this book, World War I-era photographs of self-satisfied officers, kings, and politicians, destroyed towns, rotting corpses, mass hangings, rape victims, and mutilated war veterans were

captioned with statements of outrage, satirical commentaries, bellicose pro-war declarations, patriotic songs, and militaristic slogans. Friedrich was one of Germany's most outspoken radicals whose opposition to militarism was part-and-parcel of his opposition to the state. In fact, the class-based call to consciousness at the end of "Yes Sir, I Will" echoed the preface of *War Against War!*, in which Friedrich argued:

> ... it is not the state power and force alone that compels all "subjects" to protect the throne and the money-bags, and to die for them. Capital has not only economic power in its hands; it has, equal measure and with equal power, subjected the proletariat also intellectually. This fact is easily overlooked and there still remains, therefore, so much bourgeois ideology in the proletariat! I, therefore, always say to my brothers, the proletarians, I say to the class-war fighters: "Free yourselves from bourgeois prejudices! Fight against capitalism within yourselves! In your thoughts and in your actions there still lurks unspeakably much of the philistine and the soldier, and almost in every one there is hidden a drilled subaltern, who wishes only to dominate and command, even if it be over his own comrades and over his wife and children in his family!" But I also say to those bourgeois pacifists, who seek to fight against war by mere hand caresses and tea-cakes and piously up-turned eyes: "Fight against capitalism—and you fight against every war! The battle-field in the factories and the mines, the hero's death in the infirmaries, the mass graves in the barracks, in short, the war, the apparently eternal war, of the exploited against the exploiters!"[19]

Incorporating Friedrich's masterful satire of World War I-era propaganda into her ironic tribute to the Falklands adventure, Vaucher signaled that Crass's anarchism was firmly rooted in history, with all that implied by way of a well-thought out, socially engaged perspective.[20]

While Vaucher and Crass attacked the institution of the state, both Soviet and capitalist, from an anarchist-pacifist stance, in the

United States, anarchists associated with the journals *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* developed an equally thorough-going critique of the two systems. To quote David Watson, writing in the Detroit-based *Fifth Estate*: "Ideology East and West has reasons to deny it, but the truth is that to focus on juridical property relations and terms by which hierarchically organized societies named themselves is to commit a grave, formalistic error. Modern state socialism was only a manifestation of the capitalism it claimed to supersede."[21]

Whether Communist Party-run or democratically-elected, human labor and the natural world were exploited under the aegises of the state for the benefit of a ruling class—in democracies, the property owners and technocrats, and under Communism, state and party bureaucrats.[22] Saturated by an ideology that valued hierarchy, domination, alienation, and production above all else, industrial societies were in the grip of the "megamachine"—a term first coined by Lewis Mumford to describe the mode of social organization and production through which the civilization-building elites of ancient post-hunter-gatherer societies secured control over the societies they ruled.[23] This ancient system of social organization renewed itself in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, when Communist and fascist state-capitalist dictatorships came to power. World War II accelerated its emergence in the democracies, which set the stage for the era of the Cold War, when the Communist megamachine faced off against its democratic-capitalist counterpart. The megamachine's spread was aided and abetted by industrialism, which empowered its technological capacities on a qualitatively different basis. The fall of the Berlin wall had brought no real liberation; it merely signaled that a less efficient version of the megamachine could not sustain itself in the face of the competition. (Avoiding the Soviet debacle, the Chinese Communist Party managed China's transition voluntarily.)[24]

In sum, in the early 1990s the megamachine stood triumphant. Hovering over the twentieth-century like a baleful spirit, it had spread its power across the globe, with cataclysmic results for humanity:

> [The megamachine] demands that humans conform to laws implicit in the technology itself.... Modern technologies require hierarchical and authoritarian forms of social organization in order to function.... Technological systems require a dependence of humans on these systems, and on the experts to develop and run them.... Industrial technologies are inherently damaging to the environment: outcomes are not foreseeable; there are not solutions to all problems; mistakes are inevitable; contamination is an inevitable part of the industrial system.... The ways in which humans view the world, their imaginations and perceptions, become adapted to the technological world. Humans begin to think and act in terms of the machine.[25]

By way of countering this state of affairs, Watson and others in his milieu argued that the "renewal of the sacredness of nature, its interrelatedness, and our connectedness to it" is central.[26] "If we cannot see the spirit that resides in the natural world," Watson has stated, "we cannot fully envision the ineffable human spirit of liberty that has motivated the anarchist project—before it was called 'anarchist'—from the beginning of class societies."[27] In this regard, "primal" societies have an important role to play in the struggle to reconnect with the natural world and our true nature as sentient beings. They represent an alternative to draw on in the quest to shed the "technological way of life."[28] As Watson puts it, pre-technological societies are the key to "*learning to live in a different way.*"[29]

Artistically, Watson's closest collaborator has been Freddie Baer, a collage artist and past contributor to the *Fifth Estate*. Born in Chicago in 1952, Baer was active in a number of Chicago-based anarchist organizations before moving to San Francisco in 1978.[30] She began donating collage work to the anarchist press in the early 1980s, and her illustrations appeared frequently in the *Fifth Estate* throughout that decade.[31] Politically, her outlook can be deduced from an interview conducted in 1992, in which she summarizes humanity's collective situation as unsustainable. "The world is changing so fast," Baer related,

"the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe and the corresponding rise of nationalism on the one hand, the replacement of governance by the rise of Capital on the other; total and complete eco-disaster that looms on the horizon; the dehumanization of the individual; the turn to the right by the United States and Great Britain. Things can't go on the way they have been."[32] Searching for a way forward, Baer told her interviewer she had found inspiration in "the theoretical growth taking place within parts of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian community, especially in the pages of the *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*."[33]

Her most arresting depiction of the megamachine thesis is an untitled collage based on Pieter Bruegel the Elder's oil-on-panel depiction of *The Tower of Babel* (c. 1563). Created as the cover illustration of Watson's definitive compendium, *Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire & Its Enemies* (1999), Baer's untitled collage merges the ancient Biblical tower with massive hydroelectric pylons connected to transformers jutting out of the uncompleted edifice (see color plate 14).

The "Tower of Babel" story in the Old Testament's book of Genesis is a tale of humanity's downfall at the dawn of ancient civilization. Settling on the plains of Mesopotamia (Shinar), people build a great city and begin constructing a structure that climbs into the heavens. However, God does not look kindly on the enterprise and sows chaos by taking away humanity's common language.[34]

Baer's collage is a brilliant encapsulation of the *Fifth Estate* critique: the hubris of a mythological megamachine prefigures the folly of present-day humanity's quest to transcend our earthly limitations through technology, with equally disastrous consequences for all concerned.

I began this chapter suggesting anarchists were well prepared to respond to the fall of the Berlin wall and its aftermath. In this regard, the Persian Gulf War (January 15–February 28, 1991), which overlapped the wall's dismantling (completed in November 1991), proved to be a bellwether event. If the Cold War between the Soviet Union and United States in its capacity as capitalism's anointed leader had

actually been a convergence of competing powers jockeying over resources in their respective spheres of influence, then it stood to reason that with one of the powers disintegrating, the other would wax expansive in its ambitions.[35] In short, there would be no "peace dividend," as many hoped, in the wake of the wall's destruction.[36] Instead, in the words of anarchism's most well-known political commentator, Noam Chomsky, it would be "more of the same."[37] And so it was.

The Gulf War has been characterized as a "desert holocaust" for good reason.[38] Following the invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990, US President George Bush (Sr.) mobilized an international coalition under the auspices of the United Nations with a mandate to push the Iraqi forces out. Through the fall of 1990 into 1991, the United States and its key allies blocked any attempts to resolve the issue peacefully while the armed forces of America, Britain, and a host of lesser allies gathered in Saudi Arabia. Bush declared war on January 15 (American civil rights leader Martin Luther King's birthday), and an air campaign began two days later. From then through the duration of the conflict, over 1,000 sorties a day bombed Iraqi infrastructure and pulverized its military forces. By the time the coalition ground campaign began on February 23, Iraqi forces in Kuwait were demoralized and fleeing in disarray. War ended a few days later, when Bush announced a unilateral ceasefire following the complete expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.[39]

During the war, coalition forces committed numerous atrocities. Among them: the wide use of depleted uranium shells on the battlefield, leaving behind toxic radioactive residues; the live burial of thousands of Iraqi troops by tanks equipped with plows; the deliberate bombing of Iraqi civilians, including those in air raid shelters; the targeting of Iraqi infrastructure—power plants, dams, sewage and water treatment facilities—of no military value; and the slaughter of thousands of Iraqi troops fleeing Kuwait along the so-called "highway of death." Last but certainly not least, the coalition left behind epic ecological devastation. Massed troops, bombings, and tank battles chewed up the fragile desert, and the destruction of oil facilities resulted in thick black toxic

clouds that blanketed the region for months, while oil spilled freely into the Gulf waters and across vast desert expanses.[40]

Death against life—that was the issue that gripped print artist Richard Mock in the war's immediate aftermath. The result was four linocut prints—the "Gulf War" series (1991). At the time he created them, Mock's socially critical linocuts were a regular feature in the op-ed pages of the *New York Times*, where he had been active as an editorial illustrator since 1980. Additionally, he was a painter and sculptor with a substantial exhibition record, including one-man shows at the Houston Contemporary Art Museum, the Bronx Museum of Art (New York), the Albright Knox Museum (Buffalo), and the Centro Cultural Arte (Monterrey, Mexico).[41] Anarchism was a less well-known aspect of his work, but a vital one nonetheless. In a 2001 interview, Mock attributed his political orientation to an empathy with the planet going back to his childhood years in California during the 1950s (born in 1944, he grew up in Long Beach, just north of the Baja peninsula). In the profoundest sense, he had "always been an anarchist." His first exposure to anarchism came during his college years at the University of Michigan (1961–1965), when he read British art critic and political philosopher Herbert Read's essays, notably *Anarchy and Order* (1954), an exposition of anarchist-communism along the lines of Kropotkin (see Chapter Two) which had a lasting impact on Mock's outlook.[42]

Asked in 2001 what an anarchist society would entail, Mock responded: "We would create harmony between man and nature. And we would discover, in an anarchist society, new dimensions of being human. We would take down our armor and be revelatory, revelatory in allowing the growth of collective attachments to the earth and to other people."[43] Artistically, he encapsulated his social-ecological vision best in his abstract paintings—*Untitled* (1995), for example—in which rhythmic flecks of bright color unfold organically in a dynamic interplay that finds resolution in the whole (see color plate 15). Mock called these paintings "cosmic" and "transcendent" because they create a visual field that expands beyond the picture plane, and this was his metaphor for the open structure of a harmonizing anarchist social order, as "natural" as nature itself.[44]

Richard Mock, Oil Spill Kill, *1991. Linocut print, 20" × 15¾."*

How, then, did the Gulf War prints figure in his politics? Referring to his linocuts, Mock once observed, "It's [in] the nature of my being to attack the enclosing power structures that are out to suck the planet dry."[45] Here we have the key. "Oil Spill Kill" (1991) presents the conflict as an assault on nature in the raw—Arabian Gulf wildlife is shown struggling and dying in a pool of black oil. "Victim" (1991) depicts the remains of a camel, body parts askew, whose skull has been crushed by an artillery shell. One eye pops out of the fleshy rot like a jack-in-the-box, making the abjectness of its plight almost comical, were it not for the red blood pooled underneath. Power and inequality are the theme of "Raper Vapor" (1991), in which a spiny-tailed desert lizard cautiously approaches a discarded gas mask, flicking its tongue in a futile attempt to understand it in its own terms. And lastly, Mock presents the Gulf War as death turned in on itself, transforming the entire ecology, humans included, into a "Target" (1991). Responding as nature will, the desert's most lethal creatures surround the threat

Richard Mock, Raper Vapor, *1991. Linocut print*, 20" × 15¾".

and prepare to strike. Seemingly, the natural order is attempting to combat death in the guise of a species gone awry, so disconnected from the planetary order of things it is bent on destroying itself along with everything else.

Mock's prints critiqued the Gulf War as an extension of an authoritarian power structure: an ecologically catastrophic, socially oppressive power structure at war with nature and in denial of the consequences. And so I return to the question of how to overcome this state of affairs. In one of the most searching responses to the demise of Communism, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (2000), prominent leftist Susan Buck-Morris lamented the passing of Marxism in the Communist East as a critical means of understanding capitalism while characterizing Marx's understanding of socialism as a failure: as if the two—Marx's critique and his vision of the future—had nothing to do with one another.[46] Anarchism is never

raised in her book, which ends with an appeal for leftists to strive, like Lenin, to be "as radical as reality."[47] This evocation of Lenin, whose certainty regarding the nature of reality led him to found one of the twentieth-century's most oppressive regimes, stands in stark contrast to the libertarian attitude of the artists discussed in these pages. To paraphrase Mock, they strive to be revelatory; that is, self-revealing politically, socially, and ecologically. Critiquing oppression while calling attention to the anarchic potentialities within society, they prefigure a world of possibilities in which each and every one of us are the index of reality's radicalism.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1 Noam Chomsky, *Chomsky on Anarchism*, Barry Pateman, ed. (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2005): 189.

2 Susan Buck-Morris, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000): 238. In a 1995 interview, Noam Chomsky also noted this reaction and expressed amazement that "people who had considered themselves anti-Stalinist and anti-Leninist—were demoralized by the collapse of the tyranny." See Chomsky, 166.

3 Nancy Fraser, "Postcommunist Democratic Socialism?" *After the Fall: 1989 and the Future of Freedom*, George Katsiaficas, ed. (London: Routledge, 2001): 200; Brian Palmer, "Socialism or Barbarism in Eastern Europe?" *Between the Lines* (November 9–23, 1989): 3.

4 Fred Halliday, "The Ends of Cold War," *New Left Review* 180 (March–April, 1990): 21.

5 Ibid., 23.

6 Malcolm McLaren cited in Neil Nehring, *Flowers in the Dustbin: Culture, Anarchy, and Post-War England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993): 312.

7 For a period compendium of the Sex Pistols' exploitive courting of establishment outrage and the ensuing media frenzy, see Fred and July Vermorel, *Sex Pistols: The Inside Story* (London: Ominibus Press, 1978).

8 Craig O'Hara, *The Philosophy of Punk: More Than Noise!* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1999): 81.

9 Penny Rimbaud, *Shibboleth: My Revolting Life* (Edinburgh, AK Press, 1998): 99–100; 117–122.

10 Gee Vaucher, *Crass Art and Other Pre Post-Modernist Monsters* (Edinburgh, AK Press, 1999): 6–7.

11 Crass cited in O'Hara, 81.

12 Crass cited in O'Hara, 88.

13 Rimbaud, 90–91.

14 Crass, "Nagasaki Nightmare" (1980). *www.plyrics.com/lyrics/crass/nagasakinightmare.html*

15 Rimhaud, 110–111. See Crass, "Yes Sir, I Will" (1983). *www.plyrics.com/lyrics/crass/yessiriwill.html*

16 Ibid., 236

17 Rimbaud, 239.

18 Ernst Friedrich, *War Against War!* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1987).

19 Ibid., 25.

20 Crass's anarchist-pacifist politics are clearly indebted in the first instance to the position of the War Resisters International (WRI). Founded in 1921, the WRI's leading theorists, Bart de Ligt and H. Runham Brown, were both anarchists, and they played a key role in the formulation of the WRI's program. For the WRI, capitalism and authoritarian institutions such as the state must be abolished before a lasting peace can be achieved. Resistance to authority is part of the class struggle pitting the working class against its class oppressors. Pacifism is a tactical

strategy for overthrowing authoritarian power on a qualitatively different basis. For a definitive statement of the WRI platform, see Bart de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1937).

21 David Watson, "The Fall of Communism and the Triumph of Capital" (1992), reprinted in *Against the Megamachine: Essays On Empire and Its Enemies*, (New York: Autonomedia, 1999): 95.

22 Ibid., 96.

23 On Mumford and the megamachine thesis, see Steve Millet, "Technology as capital: *Fifth Estate*'s critique of the megamachine," *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, Jonathan Purkis and James Bowen, eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004): 82.

24 Watson, "The Fall of Communism and the Triumph of Capital," 106–108.

25 Ibid., 90.

26 David Watson, "Anarchy and the Sacred," *Against the Megamachine*, 167. This chapter is a compilation of excerpts from articles and responses to letters published in the *Fifth Estate* between 1987 and 1989.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 174.

29 Watson, "Against the Megamachine," *Against the Megamachine*, 144. This chapter is based on articles published in the *Fifth Estate* in 1981–84 and 1997.

30 Thomas Murray Saté, "Questions for Freddie Baer," *Ecstatic Incisions: The Collages of Freddie Baer* (Stirling, Scotland: AK Press, 1992): 3–4.

31 Ibid., 6.

32 Ibid., 9. *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* published extensively on the prospects for anarchism in eastern Europe and Baer's comments suggest she was following the discussion closely. Many authors were cautionary, noting a rise in nationalism and fascism alongside anarchist currents. See, for example, Laure A., "At the Berlin Wall: A Personal Report on Eastern Europe," *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 24 (March–April 1990): 4, 10. Others pointed out that Soviet-style industrialism had left ecological devastation in its wake and now a "massive penetration of Western capital" was reducing the East to "essentially Third World status as markets and sources of materials and cheap labor." See Will Guest, "Ecocide on the East Side: The Environmental Crisis in Eastern Europe," *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* (Summer 1991): 21.

33 Ibid., 11.

34 "Tower of Babel." *www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%2011;&version=31*

35 Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1991): 27–28. On Chomsky's anarchism, see *Chomsky on Anarchism*, Barry Pateman, ed. (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2005).

36 William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004): 320.

37 Ibid., 320.

38 Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*, 59.

39 "Gulf War." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War (accessed November 7, 2006).
40 See Blum, 335–337 and Doublas Keller, *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992): 410–414.
41 Allan Antliff, "Ecological Anarchy: Richard Mock," *Alternative Press Review* 10 no. 2 (2006): 6.
42 Ibid., 7.
43 Allan Antliff, "Richard Mock," *Quivers: Twenty Linocuts* (Omaha, NB: Gallery 72, 2002): 10.
44 "Richard Mock: Interview with Allan Antliff" (June 25, 2001).
45 Ibid.
46 Buck-Morris, 239.
47 Ibid., 278.

Bibliography

A Post-Cubist's Impressions of New York." *New York Tribune* (March 9, 1913): part II, 1.

A., Laure. "At the Berlin Wall: A Personal Report on Eastern Europe." *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 24 (March–April 1990): 4, 10.

A.G. [Alexsei Gan]. "Tovarishch 'Lukashin'." *Anarkhiia*, n.d.

Aisen, Maurice. "The Latest Evolution in Art and Picabia." *Camera Work* Special Number (June 1913): 14–21.

"The Antiwar Movement in New York City 1965–67." updated and revised from *Les Temps Modernes* (September 1968). www.fermentmagazine.org/Bio/newleft1.html

Antliff, Allan. *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

———. "Ecological Anarchy: Richard Mock." *Alternative Press Review* 10, no. 2 (2006): 6–7.

———. "Richard Mock." *Quivers: Twenty Linoents.* Omaha, NB: Gallery 72, 2002.

———. "Richard Mock: Interview with Allan Antliff." June 25, 2001.

Antliff, Mark. "Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism: The 'Aestheticism' of the Action d'art Group, 1906–1920." *Oxford Art Journal* 21 (1998): 99–120.

———. *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

The Armory Show 50th Anniversary Exhibition. New York: Clarke and Way, 1963.

Arshinov, Peter. *History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918–1921).* Lorraine and Freddy Perlman, trans. Detroit: Black and Red, 1974.

"Art Institute Censured by Pastor for Display of 'Vulgar' Pictures." *Chicago Record Herald* (April 8, 1913): 9.

"Art of Cubists Staggers Critics in State Senate." *The Inter-Ocean* (April 3, 1913): 1.

Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, Nina. "An Artistic and Political Manifesto for Cézanne." *The Art Bulletin* (September, 1990): 482–492.

Auping, Michael, ed., *Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951–1993.* Buffalo, NY: Albright Knox Art Gallery, 1993.

Avrich, Paul. *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

———, ed. *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Paperbacks, 1973.

———, *The Russian Anarchists*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.

Bailes, Kendell E. "Alexei Gastev and the Soviet Controversy over Taylorism, 1918–24." *Soviet Studies* 29 (July 1977): 373–394.

Baldwin, Roger N., ed. *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*. New York: Dover Press, 1970.

Bann, Stephen, ed. *The Tradition of Constructivism*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1974.

Banta, Martha. *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Mirror of Production*. St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975.

Beisel, Nicola. *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Beissinger, Mark R. *Scientific Management, Socialist Discipline and Soviet Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Bergson, Henri. "Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (1900)." *Comedy*. Wylie Syphcr, ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956.

"Bezplathye kursy po anarkhizmy." *Anarkhiia*, n.d.

Billington, James H. *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith*. New York: Basic Books, 1980.

Bird, William L. Jr. and Harry R. Rubenstein. *Designing for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architecture Press, 1998.

Bleckman, Max, ed. *Drunken Boat: Art Rebellion Anarchy*. New York and Seattle: Autonomedia and Left Bank Books, 1994.

Blum, William. *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004.

Bookchin Murray, "The Youth Culture: An Anarchist-Communist View." *Hip Culture: 6 Essays on its Revolutionary Potential*. New York: Times Change Press, 1970, 51–62.

Bowie, Andrew. *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Bowlt, John E, ed. *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934*. New York: Viking Press, 1976.

Bown, Matthew Cullerne. *Socialist Realist Painting*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.

Bown, Matthew Cullerne and Brandon Taylor, eds. *Art of the Soviets: Painting,*

Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917–1992. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.

Braun, Edward. *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1998.

———, ed. *Meyerhold on Theatre*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1969.

Brinton, Maurice. *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control 1917–1921*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1975.

Brown, Milton W. *The Story of the Armory Show*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1988.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.

Cabanne, Pierre. *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Da Capo, 1987.

Camfield, William A. *Francis Picabia: His Art, Life and Times*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Camatte, Jacques. *The World We Must Leave and Other Essays*. New York: Autonomedia, 1995.

Cantine, Holley Jr. "Editorials." *Retort* 2 (Winter 1945): 2–9.

Caws, Mary Ann, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds. *Surrealism and Women*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

Century Collection, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

Chernyi, Lev. *Novoe Napravlenie v Anarkhizme: Asosiatsionnii Anarkhism*. Moscow, 1907; 2nd ed., New York, 1923.

Childs, Elizabeth C, ed. *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.

Chomsky, Noam. *Chomsky on Anarchism*. Barry Pateman, ed. Edinburgh: AK Press, 2005.

———. *Deterring Democracy*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1991.

Chu, Petra Ten-Doesschate, ed. and trans. *Letters of Gustave Courbet*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Clapp, Jane. *Art Censorship: A Chronology of Proscribed and Prescribed Art*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972.

Clark, John and Camille Martin, eds. and trans. *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: The Radical Social Thought of Elisée Reclus*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books, 2004.

Clark, T.J. *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982.

———. *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Cook, Catherine. *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of Art, Architecture, and the City*. London: Academy Editions, 1995.

Cooney, James Peter. "Editorial." *The Phoenix* 2 (Spring 1939): 120.

Corn, Wanda. *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999.

Crass. "Nagasaki Nightmare." (1980). www.plyrics.com/lyrics/crass/nagasakinightmare.html

———. "Yes Sir, I Will." (1983). Available from: www.plyrics.com/lyrics/crass/yessiriwill.html

Craven, David. *Abstract Expressionism as Cultural Critique: Dissent During the McCarthy Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

"Cubist Art Called Lewd: Investigator for Senate Vice Commission Feats Immoral Effect on Artists." *Chicago American* (April 3, 1913): 1.

Cutler, Robert M., ed. and trans. *The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869–1871*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1992.

Darien, Georges. "Maximilien Luce." *La Plume* LVII (1891): 300.

Day, Richard. *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*. London: Pluto Press, 2005.

de Zayas, Marius. *How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York*. Francis M. Naumann, ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

Demetrion, James T., ed. *Clyfford Still: Paintings 1944–1960*. Washington: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2001.

Dubois, Félix. *The Anarchist Peril*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894.

Duncan, Robert. "The Homosexual in Society." *Politics* 1 (August, 1944): 209–111.

———. "Reviewing View, An Attack." *The Ark* 1 (1947): 63–64.

Echols, Alice. *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1989.

Ernst, Jimmy. "Freedom of Expression in the Arts II." *Art Journal* 25 no. 1 (1965): 46–47.

Faas, Ekbert. *Young Robert Duncan: Portrait of the Poet as Homosexual in Society*. Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1983.

Fer, Briony, David Batchelor, and Paul Wood. *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

Feringhetti, Lawrence and Nancy J. Peters. *Literary San Francisco: A Pictorial History from its Beginnings to the Present Day*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1980.

Fleming, Marie. *The Geography of Freedom: The Odyssey of Elisée Reclus*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988.

Frascina, Francis. *Art, Politics, and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

Friedrich, Ernst. *War Against War!* Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1987.

"French Artists Spur on an American Art." *New York Tribune* (October 24, 1915): 2.

Gaughan, Martin Ignatius, ed. *Dada New York: New World for Old.* New York: G. K. Hall, 2003.

Gilbreth, Frank B. and L.M. Gilbreth. *Applied Motion Study: A Collection of Papers on the Efficient Method to Industrial Preparedness.* New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1917.

Goddard, Stephen H. *Les XX and the Belgium Avant-Garde.* Lawrence, KS: Spenser Museum of Art, 1992.

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays.* New York: Dover Press, 1969.

———. *The Social Significance of Modern Drama.* New York: Applause Theater Book Publishers, 1987.

Gough, Maria. *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005.

The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915–1932. Exhibition Catalogue. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1992.

Gregg, Frederick James, ed. *For and Against: Views on the International Exhibition held in New York and Chicago.* New York: Association of American Painters and Sculptors Inc., 1913.

Guest, Will. "Ecocide on the East Side: The Environmental Crisis in Eastern Europe." *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* (Summer 1991): 19–21.

Guieu, Jean-Max and Alison Hilton, eds. *Emile Zola and the Arts.* Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1988.

Guilbaut, Serge. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*: Arthur Goldhammer, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

"Gulf War." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War

Halliday, Fred. "The Ends of Cold War." *New Left Review* 180 (March/April 1990): 5–24.

Hapgood, Hutchins. "A Paris Painter." *New York Globe* (February 20, 1913): 8.

———. *A Victorian in the Modern World.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939.

Hauser, Arno. *The Social History of Art.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

Havel, Hippolyte, ed. *The Revolutionary Almanac.* New York: Rabelais Press, 1914.

Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. *Duchamp in Context: Science and Technology in*

the Large Glass and Related Works. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

———. *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidian Geometry in Modern Art.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Hoffman, Abbie. *Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture.* New York: Perigee, 1980.

Homer, William Innes. "Picabia's 'Jeune fille américaine dans l'état de nudité' and Her Friends." *Art Bulletin* 58 (March 1975): 110–115.

Howard, Seymour et al. *The Beat Generation: Galleries and Beyond.* Davis, CA: John Natsoulas Press, 1996.

Hutton, John. *Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground: Art, Science and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France.* Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.

"I See It," Says Mayor at Cubist Art Show." *New York Herald* (March 28, 1913): 9.

Jarry, Alfred. *The Supermale.* New York: New Directions, 1977.

Johannson, Kurt. *Aleksej Gastev: Proletarian Bard of the Machine Age.* Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1983.

Karginov, German. *Rodchenko.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.

Katsiaficas, George, ed. *After the Fall: 1989 and the Future of Freedom.* London: Routledge, 2001.

Kellner, Douglas. *The Persian Gulf TV War.* Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992.

Khan-Magomedov, Selim O. *Rodchenko; The Complete Work.* Vieri Quilici, ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987.

King, David. *The Commissar Vanishes.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997.

Knabb, Ken. *The Relevance of Rexroth.* Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1990.

Kolakowski, Lezek. *Main Currents in Marxism: The Founders.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kowalski, Ronald I. *The Bolshevik Party in Conflict: The Left Opposition of 1918.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991.

Kropotkin, Peter. *Mutual Aid.* Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988.

Kuenzli, Rudolf E., ed. *New York Dada.* New York: Willis Locker and Owens, 1986.

Kuenzli, Rudolf E. and Francis M. Naumann, eds. *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.

Lavrentiev, Alexander N., ed. *Alexandr Rodchenko: Experiments for the Future: Diaries, Essays, Letters, and Other Writings.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002.

Lawton, Lancelot. *The Russian Revolution.* London: Macmillan and Co., 1927.

Leavens, Ineana B. *From "291" to Zurich: The Birth of Dada.* Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983.

Leighten, Patricia. "Réveil anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art." *Modernism/Modernity* 2 no. 2 (1995): 17—47.

———. "The White Peril and L'Art négre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism." *Art Bulletin* 72 (December 1990): 609—630.

Levering, Ralph B. *The Cold War: 1945–1987.* Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1988.

Ligt, Bart de. *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution.* London: George Routledge & Sons, 1937.

Lubac, Henri de. *The Un-Marxian Socialist: A Study of Proudhon.* R.E. Scantlebury, trans. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948.

MacDonald, Dwight. *Memoirs of a Revolutionist.* New York: Meridian Books, 1958.

Magraw, Roger. *A History of the French Working Class: Workers and the Bourgeois Republic, 1871–1939.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992.

Malevich, K.S. *Essays on Art: 1915–1933: Vol. 1.* Troels Andersen, ed. London: Rapp and Whitling, 1968.

Maximoff, G.P. *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin.* New York: The Free Press, 1953.

Maximov, Gregorii. *The Guillotine at Work.* Chicago: Alexander Berkman Memorial Fund, 1940.

May, Todd. *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.

"May Bar Youngsters From Cubists Show." *Chicago Record Herald* (March 27, 1913):22.

McLellan, David. *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.

Meltzer, David, ed. *The San Francisco Beat Poets.* New York: Ballantine, 1971.

Merkle, Judith A. *Management and Ideology: The Legacy of the International Scientific Management Movement.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980.

Milner, John. *Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

Morgan, Robin. *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist.* New York: Vintage, 1978.

Morris, Brian. *Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom.* Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993.

Murry Saté, Thomas. "Questions for Freddie Baer." *Ecstatic Incisions: The Collages of Freddie Baer.* Stirling, Scotland: AK Press, 1992: 3–12.

Naumann, Francis M. *New York Dada.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.

Nehring, Neil. *Flowers in the Dustbin: Culture, Anarchy, and Postwar England.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Noever, Peter, ed. *Aleksander M. Rodchenko and Varvara E. Stepanova: The Future is Our Only Goal.* Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1991.

O'Hara, Craig. *The Philosophy of Punk: More than Noise!* Edinburgh: AK Press, 1999.

Palmer, Brian. "Socialism or Barbarism in Eastern Europe?" *Between the Lines* (November 9–23, 1989): 3.

Péidier, Jean. *La Commune et les Artistes.* Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1980.

"Picabia, Art Rebel, Here to Teach New Movement." *New York Times* (February 16, 1913): sect. 5, 9.

Proffer, Ellendea and Carl R. Proffer, eds. *The Ardis Anthology of Russian Futurism.* Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis Press, 1980.

Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph. *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'eglise.* Paris, 1858.

———. *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social.* Paris, 1865.

———. *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century.* London: Pluto Press, 1989.

———. *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government.* New York: Dover Press, 1970.

Purkis, Jonathan and James Bowen, eds. *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

Rabban, David M. *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Reszler, André.0 *L'esthétique anarchiste.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973.

Rimbaud, Penny. *Shibboleth: My Revolting Life.* Edinburgh: AK Press, 1998.

Rodchenko, Aleksandr. "O doklad 'T. Zalevskago v Proletkult'." *Anarkhiia,* n.d.

———. "O Muzei Morozova, II." *Anarkhiia,* n.d.

Roslak, Robyn. *Neo-Impressionist Painting and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape.* Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007.

———. "Scientific Aesthetics and the Aestheticized Earth: the Parallel Vision

of the Neo-Impressionist landscape and Anarcho-Communist Social Theory." Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1987.

Rubin, James Henry. *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Sarabianov, Dmitri V. and Natalia L. Adaskina. *Popova.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990.

Sawelson-Gorse, Naomi, ed. *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.

Schulkind, Eugene, ed. *The Paris Commune of 1871: The View from the Left.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1972.

Scruton, Roger. *Kant.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Siegel, Jeanne. *ArtWords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s.* Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985.

Signac, Paul. *D'Eugène Delacroix au néoimpressionisme.* Paris: 1899.

"'Slave' Commission to Probe Cubist Art." *The Inter-Ocean* (April 2, 1913): 10.

Smith, Richard Candida. *Utopia and Dissent: Art, Poetry, and Politics in California.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.

Sonn, Richard D. *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France.* Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

Spate, Virginia. *Orphism: The Evolution of Non-Figurative Painting in Paris, 1910–1914.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Stepelevich, Lawrence S., ed. *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Stirner, Max. *The Ego and Its Own.* London: A.C. Fifield, 1915.

Tashjian, Dikran. *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde 1920–1950.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995.

Terry, Jennifer. *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Tracy, James. *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

"Tot 'Den'." *Anarkhiia* (April 23, 1918).

"Tower of Babel." www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%2011;&version=31

Vaucher, Gee. *Crass Art and Other Pre Post-Modernist Monsters.* Edinburgh: AK Press, 1999.

Vermorel, Fred and Judy Vermorel. *Sex Pistols: The Inside Story.* London: Ominibus Press, 1978.

Vincent, K. Stephen. *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred. *My Adventures in the Commune: Paris 1871.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1914.

Ward, Martha. *Pissarro, Neo-impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Watson, David. *Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire and Its Enemies.* New York: Autonomedia, 1999.

Wittner, Lawrence S. *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941–1960.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

Woodcock, George. *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography.* Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987.

Zhadova, Larissa Alekseevna, ed. *Tatlin.* New York: Rizzoli, 1988.

Zola, Emile. *My Hatreds*, Paloma Paves-Yashinsky and Jack Yashinsky, trans. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

Index

291 49, 56–7, 60
291 art gallery 50, 53, 64

abstract expressionism 163, 168
abstraction and abstractionists 53–5, 80–4, 87, 126–7, 135, 139–40, 142–3, 146, 163, 167–8, 192
Action d'art 55
Amsterdam 149–54, 160
Anarkiia 71, 74–84, 88–9, 92
Angrand, Charles 39
anti-obscenity laws. *See* censorship
Arbeiter Ring 117
Ark 117, 125
Armory Show, the 50–3, 63–5
Art Journal 167
Artistocrats, the 55
Askarov, German 77, 89

Baer, Freddie 189–90
Bakunin, Michael 13–14, 17
Barand 152–3
Barr, Alfred 127
Bataille, George 118
Belgium 39–42
Bellmer, Hans 118
Bergson, Henri 50, 52, 58–9, 67
  Creative Evolution 52
  Laughter 58
Time and Free Will 52
Berlin wall 181–95
Biomechanics 101–6
Black Guards 73–4. *See also* Moscow Federation of Anarchists
Black Panther Party, the 164
Bloch, Anna 39
Bookchin, Murray 133–4, 161
Bradberry, George 40
Bread and Puppet Theater 140, 154
Breton, André 118, 123
Britain 72, 113–5, 117, 153, 183–4, 190–1
Brooklyn College, City University of New York 136–49, 154, 167–8, 178
Bruegel the Elder Pieter 190
  The Tower of Babel 190
Bruno, Guido 65
Buck Morris, Susan 194–5
  Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West 194–5
Burliuk, David 76
Bush, George, Sr. 191

Cage, John 134
California School of Arts 126–7
Camera Work 50, 53
Cantine, Holly 115–16, 125
capitalism 12–14, 17–18, 37–46, 72–3, 98, 103, 115, 120–1, 181–195
censorship 54–67, 129, 138, 167
Central Institute of Labor 103
Cheka, the 74–7, 89, 103, 109
Chernyi, Lev 77, 89
Chomsky, Noam 134, 181, 191
City University of New York. *See* Brooklyn College
Cold War, the 120, 126–7, 168, 188, 190
collage and collage artists 127–8, 156–7, 166, 173, 182–5
Collins, Jess 125–9
  If All the World Were Paper and All the Water Sink 126
  Mouse's Tale 127–8
Communism (general) 181–3, 188, 194–5
  Communism and the Communist Party (Russian) 71–7, 88–9, 97–105, 109

Communism (US) and the American Communist Party 115, 135–8
Comstock, Anthony 61–7
constructivism and constructivists 97–109
Cooney, Blanche 118–21
Cooney, James 118–21
Courbet, Gustave 11, 17–33
Burial at Ornans 23
Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory, The 24
Return from the Conference 22–3, 25
Stonebreakers 23
Crass 182–7
Cross, Henri Edmond 39, 45–6
The Wanderer 45–6
Cubism 50, 59
cubism and cubists 50–64, 80, 88, 145

Dada, advent of 49–67
Dadaism and Dadaists 49, 67
de La Fresnaye, Roger 50
de Zayas, Marius 50, 56–7, 60
di Prima, Diane 134
drawing. *See* illustrations and illustrators
Drawing Resistance 170, 174–6
Dubois-Pillet, Albert 39
Duchamp, Marcel 50, 53–4
Duchamp-Villon, Raymond 50
Duff, Peggy 149
Duncan, Robert 117–29, 134

egoism and anarchism 53–5, 77, 83–8
England *See* Britain

Falklands War 183–7
Federation of Artists, the 32–3
feminism and feminists 134, 157–9, 165
Feuerbach, Ludwig 18, 20–1, 25–8
Fifth Estate 173, 188–90
Filippov, Nikolai 79, 81
Fini, Leonor 118
Flipside 182
Ford, Charles Henry 117–18, 122–5
France. *See* Paris; Paris Commune
Free Speech League 64
freedom and liberty 12–14, 18–33, 43–6, 53–6, 77, 84, 114, 120–2, 126–8, 137–8, 159, 163–7, 189
Friedrich, Ernst 186–7
futurism and futurists 76–83

galleries 50, 53, 56–7, 63–6, 118, 128, 153, 176
Gan, Alexei 76, 89, 98, 109
Constructivism 98
Gastev, Alexei 100–5, 107, 109
gay and lesbian, people and issues 113–29, 134, 139, 152–3, 165. *See also* homosexuality
Gay Liberation Front 165
Gazeta Futuristov 76–7
Ge, Aleksandr 73
Germany and Germans 17–21, 31, 72–3, 113, 143, 150, 186–7. *See also* Berlin wall
Gérôme, Jean-Léon 23, 26
Greek Interior 23
Gideonse, Harry 137–8
Gleizes, Albert 50–2, 59
Goldman, Emma 12–3, 117, 134
Golub, Leon 144–5
Greenberg, Clement 127
Greenwich Village 64, 66
Grün, Karl 17–18, 20
Guardian, the 154–6, 162–9
Gulf War, Persian 190–5. *See also* Iraq

Hapgood, Hutchins 50–2, 64
harmony and social order 43–6, 192–3. *See also* freedom
Haviland, Paul 50, 57
Havel, Hippolyte 64–5
Saint Anthony, Guardian of Morals 64–5
Hegel, Wilhelm 17–21
Hegelian theory and Hegelians 17–21
Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, The (Vkhutemas) 97–99
Hoffman, Abbie 159–61
Holland 149–50. *See also* Amsterdam

homosexuality and homosexuals 54, 113–29
House of Anarchy, the 74, 76
House of Free Art, the 76

illustrations and illustrators 40, 45–6, 56–60–5, 109, 118, 135, 141, 146, 149–56, 169–72, 182–3, 189–92
industrialism and industrialists 37–46, 49, 59–60, 99–106, 118–20, 186–9
International Anthem 182
Iraq 191. *See also* Gulf War

Jacobus, Harry 128
Jarry, Alfred 60–1, 128
  Supermale 60
journals, magazines, and newspapers. See *291*; *Action d'art*; *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*; *Anarkiia*; *Ark*; *Art Journal*; *Camera Work*; *Fifth Estate*; *Flipside*; *Gazeta Futuristov*; *Guardian*; *International Anthem*; *L'Assiette Au Beurre*; *L'en dehors*; *La Plume*; *Le Père Pinard*; *Les Temps Nouveaux*; *Liberation Magazine*; *Movement, The*; *Politics*; *Rat*; *Retort*; *Revolutionary Almanac, The*; *Rogue*; *Vanguard, The*; *View*; *World War 3*. *See also* pamphlets

Kamenskii, Vasilii 76
Kant, Immanuel 21–2
King Ubu 128–9
Khlebnikov, Velimir 83
Kropotkin, Peter 11–14, 43, 192
Kruchenykh, Alexei 83, 87, 90
Kuwait 191. *See also* Gulf War

L'Assiette Au Beurre 39
L'en dehors 39
La Plume 39–40
laborers. *See* workers
Lamantia, Philip 117, 128
Le Père Pinard 39
Lebasque, Henri 40–1
  Procession 40–1
Léger, Fernand 50
Les Temps Nouveaux 39–41, 45–6
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich 72–3, 102–3, 195
Libertarian Circle, the 117, 125, 128
liberty. *See* freedom and liberty
linocuts 192–4
Living Theatre collective 134
Luce, Maximilien 39, 42–3
  Factory Chimneys: Couillet Near Charleroi, The 42–3
Lukashnin, A. 76

Macdonald, Dwight 114–15, 121
magazines. *See* journals, magazines, and newspapers
Magnanimous Cuckold 99, 106–9
Magraw, Roger 38
Magritte, René 118
Makhno, Nestor 76
Malevich, Kazimir 76, 82–7
  White on White 83–4
Marx, Karl 17–18, 77, 181–2, 195
Marxism and Marxists 12, 71, 89, 97, 104, 120, 133–4, 143, 164, 194
Maximov, Gregorii 74–5
Mayakovskii, Vladimir 76
McCarthyism 113–29
megamachine, the 188–90
metaphysics 20–2, 25–9, 50, 52–5, 59, 77, 82, 87–8
Metzinger, Jean 50, 59
Meyer, Agnes Ernst 57
Meyerhold, Vsevolod 99–101, 104–9
Millman, Paul 136
Mirbeau, Octave 44
Mock, Richard 192–5
  Gulf War series 192
  "Oil Kill Spill" 193
  "Raper Vapor" 193–4
  "Target" 194
  Untitled 192
  "Victim" 193
modernism and modernists 49–66
Morozov mansion 71, 74
Moscow Federation of Anarchists 73–9
Movement, The 154–5

Mumford, Lewis 188

Napoleon III, Louis 24–5, 31
nature, issues and depictions of 24, 27–8, 43,45,58, 188–9, 192–5
neo-impressionism and neo-impressionists 37–46
New York 49–67, 116, 118, 121, 123, 135–6, 139–40, 152, 154–5, 158–65, 168, 173
New York Society for the Repression of Vice 61. *See also* Comstock, Anthony
newspapers. *See* journals, magazines, and newspapers
Nicholas II, Tsar 72
Nin, Anaïs 37,46
non-objectivism and non-objectivists 76, 82–4, 126–7
Norton, Alan 64
nudes 24,63–6

obscenity laws. *See* censorship
October Revolution, the 71–2,98

pacifism and pacifists 114, 134, 182, 186–8
painting and painters 17, 22–30, 39, 42–5, 50–6, 59, 64, 76, 80–91, 97–8, 109, 117, 125–7, 135, 142–6, 150, 192
pamphlets 11–12, 45,64. *See also* journals, magazines, and newspapers
Paris 17–33, 39, 50, 53–6
Paris Commune, the 17–33, 37, 39
performing arts and performers. *See* theater and performance
Peters, Yakov 109
photography and photographers 26, 29, 39–43, 50–2, 56,61, 100, 102, 109, 122, 140, 166, 170, 172–4, 186
Picabia, Francis 49–67
Dances at the Spring 50, 52, 63
De Zayas, De Zayas! 57
Edtaonisl *(Ecclesiastic)* 55,63
Girl Born Without a Mother 56
New York Perceived Through the Body 53
object portraits 49, 46, 58,60,67
Portrait of a Young American Girl in a State of Nudity 49, 51, 56, 58–61, 66–7
Saint of Saints—This is a Portrait About Me, The 57
Voila Haviland The Poet as He Sees Himself 57
Picasso, Pablo: *Guernica* 145
Pissarro, Camille 39–40,44
Apple Picking at Eragny-sur-Epte 44
Social Turpitudes 40
Pissarro, Lucien 39
Plamen, Baian 79, 80,83
poetry and poets 11, 21, 74, 76, 83, 87, 101, 117–18, 121, 134, 149, 153, 161, 163, 173
Poetry Conference, the 125
Poetry Forum, the 117
Politics 114, 116, 121
Popova, Luibov 106–9
Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph 11, 14, 17–33
Provo 149–54, 159–60
punk music and musicians 149, 152, 175, 182. *See also* Crass

Rainer, Dachine 115–16
Rat 155–60, 163–71
realism 24–9
reason. *See* Hegel; Hegelian theory and Hegelians; Proudhon
Reclus, Elisée 43–4
Red Army, the 76,89, 99, 102
Reinhardt, Ad 140–5, 154, 168
Retort, The 115, 125
Rexroth, Kenneth 117, 128
Revolutionary Almanac, The 64–5
Rimbaud, Penny 182–4
Rodchenko, Aleksandr 71, 74, 76, 79–91, 98–9, 109
(pseud. Anti) 84–5, 88, 109
Black on Black 84–8, 90,98
Oval Hanging Spatial Construction no. 12 99
"Rodchenko's System" 84–7, 90–1
Ten Years of Uzbekistan 109

Rogue 64
Rosenblum, Walter 140
Rozanova, Olga 76
Russia and Russians 17, 71–89, 99, 102–3, 113. *See also* Soviet Union
Russian Revolution, The 71–89

San Francisco 117, 125, 154–5, 160, 189
sculpture and sculptors 50, 56, 76, 80, 97–8, 153, 192
sexuality, issues and representations of, 54–61, 66–7, 103, 113–29, 133–4
Seurat, Georges 39
scientific management 100–7
Signac, Paul 39
Snyder, Gary 134
Simensky Bietila, Susan 133–77
Sohey, James Thrall 127
socialism and socialists 12, 14, 77, 99, 103–4, 107, 116, 167, 181, 188, 195
Soviet Union 97, 102, 104, 115, 121, 126, 167–8, 190. *See also* McCarthyism; Russia
Spain 121, 145, 153, 168
Spanish Civil War 115, 145, 153
spirit and spirituality 12, 18–20, 27, 83, 88, 91, 126, 143, 189
"world spirit" 18–20
State Higher Theater Workshops 99
Steiglitz, Alfred 50, 53, 56–7, 64
Stepanova, Varvara 84, 88–9, 97–9, 107–9
Still, Clyfford 126–8
Stirner, Max 53–5, 77, 81, 85–7, 90
street theater 140, 153–4, 157, 172
Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) 135–9, 146–7, 150–2, 155–7, 163–6
suprematism and suprematists 76, 82–7, 106
surrealism and surrealists 117–18, 122–3, 145

Tatlin, Vladimir 76, 78–81, 83, 87–8, 98, 109
Taylorism. *See* scientific management
Thatcher, Margaret 184
theater and performance. 74–9, 87, 99–101, 128, 104–9, 140. *See also* Biomechanics; street theater
Tice, Clara 64–6
Trotsky, Leon 102–3, 138
Udalt'sova, Nadezhda 76, 79
United Kingdom. *See* Britain
United States of America and Americans 12–14, 49–67, 101–2, 113–29, 133–77, 183, 190–1. *See also* Greenwich Village; New York; San Francisco

Vaucher, Gee 182–7
Van Rysselberghe, Théo 39–40
The Wanderers 39–40
Vanguard, The 137
Verhaeren, Emile 39–40
Vesnin, Alexandr 107
Vietnam War and the anti-Vietnam War movement 133, 136–41, 147, 162–4
View, the 117–19, 122–5
Villon, Jacques 50

WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) 158–9
War Against War! (Friedrich) 186–7
Watson, David 188–90
Wilde, Oscar: monument of 54–5
workers, issues and representations of 23–5, 32, 37–46, 72–3, 77, 88, 99, 101–7, 181, 188
World War I 14, 49, 55, 72, 80, 115, 186–7
World War II 14, 113, 115, 137, 141, 188
World War 3 170, 173–4

Yakulov, Georgii 79
Yippies 139, 158–61, 169

Zola, Emile 17, 26–30, 33

Activist and art critic ALLAN ANTLIFF, Canada Research Chair in Modern Art at the University of Victoria in Victoria, BC, Canada, edited *Only a Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004) and is author of *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (University of Chicago Press, 2001). He is art editor for the UK-based journal *Anarchist Studies* and a frequent contributor to *Canadian Art* and *Galleries West* magazines.